

INSPECTION REPORT

LITTLE HEATH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Spring Road, Coventry, CV6 7FN

LEA area: Coventry

Unique reference number: 103647

Headteacher: Mr P Albans

Reporting inspector: Mr Alan Blank
8358

Dates of inspection: 8th - 11th October 2001

Inspection number: 194067

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Spring Road Coventry
Postcode:	CV6 7FN
Telephone number:	024 7668 8006
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Rowlatt
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8358	Alan Blank	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards, results and achievements? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What the school should do to improve further?
1329	Kevern Oliver	Lay inspector		Standards of attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work with parents?
26405	Carol Bond	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology The Foundation Stage Equal opportunities Provision for pupils who have English as an additional language Special educational needs	
12172	Wendy Knight	Team inspector	English Music Religious education	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education
10204	David Vincent	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Little Heath School is situated in the Longford ward of Coventry. The school was last inspected in 1997. The school has 196 pupils aged between 4 and 11 on roll, 56% of whom have English as an additional language. Pupils enter the school with well below average attainment and 33% of pupils have special educational needs. The school has a high number of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than the official start and finish of primary education. Currently 36% of pupils register for free school meals. The school has 11 pupils whose families are described as asylum seekers or refugees. It is part of the Coventry Educational Action Zone (EAZ) and received a Schools' Achievement Award for improvement in its test results in 1999 and 2000. It has links with a local beacon school designed to improve standards in writing.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Little Heath is an effective school. Though the standards achieved are low, Little Heath enables all its pupils to make at least satisfactory progress. The majority of pupils, those for whom English is an additional language and those who have special educational needs, make good progress. Teaching is good and the school is well led. The inclusion of all its pupils and their parents from many backgrounds is a major strength of the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good and the work of support teachers and staff is exceptional.
- The progress of pupils who have English as an additional language or special educational needs is good.
- The quality of leadership and management is good.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
- The school includes and involves all of its pupils and their families.
- Links with parents and a large range of other schools widen pupils' educational experience.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are low.
- Progress in music, art and design and technology is unsatisfactory.

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. At that time 25% of teaching was unsatisfactory, standards were low and the progress made by pupils in Key Stage 1 was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved a great deal and all pupils now make at least satisfactory progress. Little progress has been made in the provision for design and technology and music, and in art standards have fallen. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved, though performance in tests in 2001 fell from the peak in 2000. The improvement in information and communication technology (ICT) has been very good and the overall curriculum is now better planned and balanced than in 1997. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language or those with special educational needs is good and they are very well supported by specialist teachers and classroom assistants.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
bottom 5%	E*

Standards in 1999 fell from those achieved in 1998, so that in English and mathematics the results fell into the lowest 5% of schools nationally. There was a general rise in the three core subjects in 2000 and in particular there was a big improvement in the writing component of English. Mathematics is proving the most difficult subject to improve. There is no consistent difference in the performance of girls and boys, a good proportion of pupils with English as an additional language achieve the highest levels in tests at the end of both key stages. Current standards in English and mathematics are well below average at the end of both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 1 standards in reading and mathematics are low compared to all schools and those deemed similar; however in writing standards are in line with schools nationally and well above similar schools. Targets set for Key Stage 2 pupils in 2001 were not reached, and this was predictable from the evidence the school had on the prior attainment of pupils in the year group. In science the standards seen in pupils' books indicated higher achievement than that reflected by test results, though standards were still below average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are good, they enjoy writing and are keen to attend homework clubs. The presentation of work could be improved in some classes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and out of class is good. There is a need to separate pupils playing football from younger pupils and those wanting to talk quietly as sometimes boisterous play is misconstrued as bullying. No bullying was observed during the inspection.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils and relationships in school are good. All members of the community respect the feelings and beliefs of others.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are well below average. This is a result of a small number of very poorly attending pupils and extended holidays taken by some families.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is consistently good in the reception class, and in years 1, 2 and 6. Here, teachers' knowledge and understanding is good and teachers use marking and ongoing assessment to help to consolidate pupils' learning. In other year groups teaching is usually satisfactory. Two thirds of all teaching is good or better, almost one third is satisfactory and there is a small amount of teaching that is unsatisfactory. Throughout the school the use of support staff working with pupils who have English as an additional language and those with special educational needs is very effective. Teaching in English and mathematics follows the pattern of teaching generally and basic skills are taught satisfactorily in literacy and numeracy lessons. Occasionally unsatisfactory teaching results when teachers are not clear enough about what they want pupils to learn or occasionally where their own knowledge is insecure. Pupils' learning does not always match the quality of teaching in English and mathematics; it is sometimes inhibited by their lack of understanding of the language used, particularly where this is technical. Learning, often good in lessons, is not always matched by progress over time because the ability of pupils to apply knowledge and skills is limited and this does not help in consolidating their understanding.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is well planned. Pupils have equal opportunity to experience a good range of learning opportunities. Links with the community and other schools enrich pupils' education and raise their levels of awareness of others.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are very well supported and procedures are thorough. This results in pupils making good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Pupils are very well supported. Support teachers and assistants are very highly skilled. Pupils usually make good progress and many of the more able pupils reach high levels of attainment.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. Pupils' moral and social development is good, this is enhanced by a clear and well understood behaviour policy. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory but more could be made of the rich mix of cultures present in the school population.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well cared for. Procedures for eliminating bullying and poor behaviour are very good. Procedures for improving attendance are also very good.

The school's links with parents are very effective, they feel involved and included in their children's learning. Parents who have English as an additional language are valued and their knowledge of ethnic languages is used by the school. Parents who are seeking asylum are encouraged to participate and this helps them to come to terms with a new country. Links with other schools who have pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties are especially valuable in giving pupils a wider view and understanding of people who have disabilities. The school has good systems for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and senior staff provide clear leadership. Strategic planning aims at improving pupils' progress and raising standards. Monitoring strategies have resulted in much improved teaching.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Sound. Governors work closely with staff to plan school development. Governors have clear roles that are about to be reviewed as vacancies are filled. They are aware of the need to improve standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has good procedures for monitoring academic progress and it makes good use of the LEA to evaluate its overall performance and teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Financial control is good. The school sets priorities and monitors the effectiveness of decisions and policies. The development of resources in ICT has been very effective in raising standards.

The school has a generous number of teachers and support staff who help pupils who have English as an additional language and those with special educational needs to make good progress. Governors and teachers produce the school development plan which creates a common purpose and approach to school improvement. Governors monitor spending closely, looking for value and quality in services and resources. The accommodation is satisfactory though some classrooms are small. The site manager is very thorough and sets high standards in cleanliness and maintenance. The playground could be developed to provide areas for younger pupils and those who just want to talk.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school keeps parents well informed and reports are good. • Parents feel valued and included in their children's learning. • Parents appreciate the homework clubs that develop good habits and attitudes. • Parents feel that the school has improved, it is calmer, and that both behaviour and teaching have improved in recent years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents say that some younger pupils are intimidated in the playground by the boisterous behaviour of older pupils. They think some segregation of the playground could be useful.

The inspection team agrees with all the views expressed by the parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Foundation Stage

1 Children enter the reception class with a range of abilities and pre-school experiences. Overall their skills in the vital areas of language and mathematics are poorly developed. Consistent progress is maintained throughout the reception year, enabling children to reach average standards in social, physical and creative development, but the majority of them do not reach the same standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematics or knowledge and understanding of the world. Children who have English as an additional language and those who are at an early stage of English language acquisition are very well supported and make good progress, but even so they do not all reach the standards expected of children entering Key Stage 1.

Key Stage 1

2 Results in tests taken in 2000 were well below national averages in reading and mathematics though in line with averages in writing. When the results are compared to schools similar to Little Heath, performance in reading is still below average, writing is well above and mathematics is well below. Writing is a relative strength and mathematics is proving the most difficult area to improve, as is acknowledged by the school. Results in these tests over different years reveal some annual differences in the performance of boys and girls, but there is no clear pattern or trend in these differences. Since 1997 when the last inspection took place there has been a general improvement in results though mathematics fell a little from 1999 to 2000. Observations during this inspection confirm that standards remain well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. Speaking and listening skills are below average. In information and communication technology (ICT), physical education and religious education standards are in line with those expected nationally. In all other subjects standards are below the expected levels. Often this is because pupils' basic skills do not support their work in subjects such as history and geography. However in art, music and design and technology this is not the case; progress is unsatisfactory and could be improved.

Key Stage 2

3 Speaking and listening skills remain below average overall throughout the key stage and this, along with low levels in other basic skill, has an impact on the standards achieved in many subjects. Results in 2000 indicate below average standards for schools nationally in English and well below average in science and mathematics. The difficulties with mathematics continue throughout this key stage. However when these same results are compared to schools similar to Little Heath standards are above average in English and average in mathematics and science. There are annual differences between the performance of girls and boys but nothing that constitutes a regular trend. In 2000 the year group was made up 19 boys and 4 girls, and with such numbers views on gender differences in performance are at best speculative. The performance of pupils since 1997 has a general trend of improvement, hence the Schools' Achievement Award, but it is irregular. In 1999 performance fell in the three subjects tested, English, mathematics and science. Results rose in 2000, but have fallen again in 2001. At the time of writing there are no national comparisons available for 2001 results. School information on pupils who took tests in 2001 show that they were of lower ability as a year group and their performance in Key Stage 1

tests in 1997 would confirm this, even when account is taken of pupils joining the school since then.

4 To compensate for this the school split the year group into two very small classes. Even so results remained low. A review of the work of these pupils in science reveals higher achievement than that indicated by test results. Difficulties with technical language and the test environment could explain the difference between attainment throughout the year and results in tests.

5 Current standards in English and mathematics are well below average and in science they are below average. Standards in physical education, religious education and most aspects of ICT are in line with national expectations. Standards in all other subjects are below those expected nationally and, once again, it is often because basic skills do not support these other areas of the curriculum. This cannot be said for subjects where progress is deemed unsatisfactory; art, design and technology and music. Though the school has rightly prioritised English and mathematics and has made very good improvement in standards in ICT, progress in these subjects needs to be improved.

Pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL)

6 Over half of pupils have English as an additional language. Provision for these pupils is good and they receive good support. As a result these pupils progress at a better rate than other pupils generally, whose overall progress is satisfactory. EAL pupils are frequently amongst the highest achievers.

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN)

7 The provision for children with special educational needs is effective, and pupils make good progress in all key stages of the school. The percentage of children in need of support is higher than the average nationally and this is reflected in standards generally. Higher achieving pupils in year 6 have recently been identified and are given specialist sessions to develop their mathematical learning appropriately.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8 The majority of pupils enjoy their days in Little Heath Primary. For them the school is a happy, secure and tolerant place where they can learn and play with their friends. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and spoke to the inspection team agree with this point of view.

9 Pupils' behaviour has improved since the previous inspection. The overwhelming majority of pupils accept the school's code of conduct and the reward and sanction system that goes with it. They know and understand what is expected of them and why good behaviour is important for all aspects of their education and development.

10 The overall standard of behaviour in classes is good and pupils are therefore able to make best use of time and opportunities to learn. A year 2 history class, for example, was very well behaved throughout a trip around local streets to look at buildings. The same class was attentive during a religious education lesson about Sikhism. A year 6 class was interested and hard working throughout a history lesson on Coventry in World War II. Any lapses from this good standard are generally due to individual or small groups of pupils losing their concentration, fidgeting and straying from their task. They invariably get back to their work when their teachers intervene and remind them what they have to do.

11 Playground behaviour is quite boisterous as pupils play a variety of chasing, running and ball games. All ages are mixed up together and as a result there is a risk of younger pupils coming to harm as, for example, they are accidentally hit by a ball or bumped into by older ones. Pupils do, however, look after each other and quickly seek help from their supervisors if they think someone is hurt or upset. Pupils know what to do if they feel that they are being bullied. No bullying or bad behaviour was seen during the course of the inspection.

12 Little Heath encourages its pupils to take responsibility for themselves and others. In a year 5 ICT lesson, for example, pupils confidently worked together in pairs and, when necessary, on their own. Reception pupils responded positively to the challenge of organising themselves during lessons. Older pupils delivered attendance registers and willingly helped to set up and operate equipment such as lights and overhead projectors during assemblies.

13 Pupils respect and get on well with their teachers, classroom assistants and the other adults who work with them. They support one another and show impressive knowledge and understanding of each other's feelings. The racial harmony, which was praised by the previous inspection, is still very evident and is a real strength of Little Heath Primary. In a year 5 personal, social and health education lesson for example, pupils were visibly shocked and concerned when one of them revealed that she had been racially abused in the street. A year 2 project, involving disabled pupils from local special schools, was a great success because of the interest, care and concern which Little Heath's pupils brought to it. Pupils are delighted when their friends do well. They celebrate each other's successes. Compositions in a year 6 music lesson, for example involving the creation of frightening mechanical sounds, were greeted with spontaneous applause and constructive comments.

14 Attendance levels are well below national averages and are unsatisfactory. The school day and lessons start and finish on time but the overall standard of punctuality is spoilt by the persistent lateness of a small number of pupils. During the last school year there were, unusually, a number of exclusions as the school successfully dealt with a particular situation.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15 Teaching overall is good throughout the school. In the 52 lessons observed, teaching was judged very good in 6%, good in 58% satisfactory in 29% and unsatisfactory in 6%. At the time of the last inspection teaching was unsatisfactory in 25% of lessons and the progress made by pupils was unsatisfactory throughout Key Stage 1 and in year 4 in Key Stage 2. It is obvious from these figures that the quality of teaching has improved a great deal. This is supported by parents who have had children at the school throughout the period from 1997 to the present. There are several factors that have led to the improvement. There has been a significant change in staffing and new national strategies for literacy and numeracy have provided a good structure for successful lessons. Training and monitoring of teaching by senior members of staff and local authority inspectors has helped to identify weaknesses and spread good practice. For instance, the quality of teaching in ICT is now consistently good; formerly it was poor.

16 Teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 is almost always good regardless of the subject being taught. The same is true of year 6 in Key Stage 2. In the rest of Key Stage 2, although teaching ranges from good to unsatisfactory overall, teaching is satisfactory. There are a some relatively inexperienced teachers in Key Stage 2 who are still learning their craft and adjusting to a new class at this stage of the year.

17 Teachers' knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the age range they are teaching is especially good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Occasionally in Key Stage 2 it is not as good and this leads to some activities being chosen that do not match pupils' ability closely enough. For instance in one literacy lesson more able pupils were asked to reorder information on climate and weather into sentences, but they were unsure of what was expected of them and most did not manage the task. In the same lesson the less able pupils were asked to replace one word in a series of simple sentences that were completely unrelated to the thirty-five minute introduction that had preceded the activity. Pupils saw little relevance in the task and quickly became bored. In a number of literacy lessons the introductions were too long and in some cases pupils could not assimilate all they were expected to before moving on to group activities. Teachers' planning is good generally, but in weaker lessons teachers need to be more specific and precise about what they want pupils to learn rather than what they want them to do.

18 Better teaching includes careful questioning that challenges pupils to develop their answers, which at first can be short and incomplete. Often at these moments learning support teachers and assistants make invaluable contributions. Without disrupting the flow of the lesson they probe, support and tease answers out of pupils particularly those for whom English is an additional language or those who have special educational needs. An important facet of their work is their awareness and willingness to allow pupils time to think before responding. This patience is almost always rewarded by an insightful answer or interesting contribution. For example when year 2 pupils carry out a survey of local buildings their vocabulary is extended using terms such as 'slates', 'detached' and 'rendering'. As well as this oral response some teachers use their marking to challenge pupils' thinking and understanding and in doing so deepen both. For instance, in a year 6 class the teacher writes, "Did your results really show that salt dissolved more quickly in a greater quantity of water?" The pupils respond "Yes, but not in every case." Again in English the teacher refers to her own marking at the start of a lesson to consolidate pupils' understanding of the term 'noun'.

19 In some lessons, despite good teaching, the progress made by pupils is slower than average. The constant need for translation, elaboration and clarification does slow the pace down. Yet, it is this sensitive awareness of the needs of the pupils that avoids confusion at such times.

20 The work of learning support teachers and assistants is always planned, thoughtful and effective. The contribution they make to pupils' learning is exceptional. They work in harmony with teachers and their intervention is so smooth that the direction of a lesson can move from one adult to another without pause. Whether they are supporting individual pupils or preparing the ICT suite for the whole class, they demonstrate high levels of skill and knowledge. It is clear that this does not happen without considerable efforts by the individuals concerned and effective training and deployment.

21 Teachers throughout the school use resources well. The ICT suite is used to develop pupils' knowledge in a range of subjects. In mathematics teachers use individual response boards so that all pupils have to take part in oral, whole class elements of lessons.

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

22 The school teaches all the subjects required by the National Curriculum and meets the related legal requirements. The requirements for religious education are also met. The curriculum offered provides a satisfactory range of opportunities for learning. In particular, the school successfully motivates its pupils to have a good attitude to work and this has a

positive effect upon their learning. The school places considerable emphasis on English and mathematics and although this puts pressure upon the time available for other subjects, all are given a secure place in the overall programme. The school has endeavoured to provide a balance between the academic and the more practical subjects in the daily timetables. However in some classes there is room for greater variety in the type of activity pupils are expected to do. Satisfactory links between subjects are established and this makes learning more meaningful. The topic relating to Egypt for example, provides opportunities to develop geography, history, writing and art. The school has introduced the National Literacy Strategy effectively and English skills are used satisfactorily in other subjects. The National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented with consistency and care and this is having a positive effect upon the provision for mathematics. The use of numeracy to help learning in other subjects is satisfactory. There are weaknesses in the curriculum offered in art, music and design and technology. ICT is used well in a range of subjects.

23 The school is determined to provide an education which meets the particular needs of all its pupils and lessons routinely contain activities designed specifically for the higher and lower achievers. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and the requirements of the Code of Practice are fully met. Provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is very good. The school is keen to ensure that all pupils have access to the full range of learning activities and that there is appropriate provision to enable all pupils to benefit from this access.

24 The governing body has approved an appropriate policy for the teaching of sex education and matters relating to health education are given considerable emphasis. The school's programme for health education includes the required emphasis upon the dangers associated with the misuse of drugs as the school seeks to ensure that pupils are provided with the knowledge and awareness which will help them make informed choices as they grow older. The personal development of pupils is given high priority and a programme that deals with a range of important and sensitive issues is successfully delivered. The development of good relationships and consideration for others is deeply embedded in the life and work of the school. Considerable efforts are made to develop pupils' self-esteem. Overall, the provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.

25 The school has adopted sound guidance in order to describe what should be taught to each class. This documentation provides a satisfactory basis for ensuring that a balanced programme is delivered. In a number of subjects, for example, geography, history and art, further definition is required to ensure that skills and knowledge are built up more systematically. There is keen awareness of the need to review the way subjects are taught and the staff meet regularly to discuss curricular matters and to improve their expertise. Staff are keen to extend their professional knowledge and training in mathematics and ICT are examples of how this has enabled teachers to deliver the curriculum more effectively. There is a clear determination, shared by all associated with the school, to continue the process of curricular improvement.

26 The number of extra-curricular activities, which is largely dependent upon the voluntary efforts of teachers and others, is satisfactory but the number of inter-school competitive events is limited. Visits to places of educational value, including a residential visit, make beneficial contributions to several curricular areas.

27 Good links with the community are evident. The school has established valuable contacts with a number of local companies such as Jaguar Cars and the Transport Museum and these are used productively to generate educational opportunities for pupils. A visit to the Massey-Ferguson factory, for example, provided practical scientific and design investigation under the theme 'Moving Parts'. Jaguar Cars sponsor and support some

reading initiatives. The school is a member of the Coventry Business Partnership and this also helps to promote the good association with the community.

28 Links with other educational institutions are very good. Teachers meet regularly with their colleagues in other schools in order to share ideas and to ensure that the move between the primary and secondary stages is as smooth as possible. The school participates in a number of innovative schemes involving other schools. This often has the effect of increasing teachers' expertise, making more sophisticated facilities available and providing stimulating opportunities for pupils. An arts project centred on a local secondary school, will soon promote such varied disciplines as photography, drama and dance.

29 There has been a good response to the curricular weaknesses identified in the last inspection. There was criticism of planning and this is now at least satisfactory. The programmes of teaching, which were said to be in need of greater clarity, are now satisfactorily specified although further definition is needed in some subjects. The time allocated to each subject was judged to be in need of review and each subject is now fixed firmly in the timetable despite the time pressures imposed by the concentration upon literacy and numeracy. Shortcomings in the procedures for health education have been rectified.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

30 The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory with strengths in opportunities for them to develop morally and socially. This is similar to the judgement at the time of the last inspection.

31 Pupils are given appropriate chances to reflect and explore different beliefs through religious education lessons and during collective worship, as at the time of the last inspection. During religious education lessons there are regular opportunities to reflect on values and emotions and chances to explore prayer and worship. Assembly themes cover a wide range of suitable topics and these are suitably explored through story, poetry and life experiences. During the inspection, for instance, pupils observed with awe photographs of the landscape and clouds and listened to the story of the very hungry caterpillar while considering the wonder of metamorphosis into a butterfly. Pupils also sang relevant hymns which celebrate the variety of life on earth. Listening to music and considering informal prayers appropriately encourages reflection. Within the daily curriculum, however, opportunities are seldom planned for providing chances to ponder and reflect.

32 The school ethos promotes a strong moral code, and this aspect has continued to develop since the last inspection. Pupils are well aware of acceptable attitudes and behaviour through the school's code of conduct and associated class rules. They quickly learn to conform to this, and to learn right from wrong. Ideas of honesty, fairness and justice are regularly discussed in lessons and when any incidents occur. In year 5, for instance, pupils gave their opinions about whether the characters in *The Water Tower* should defy their parents' wishes and visit the building.

33 The school is determined to involve all its pupils and social development is also well promoted and new opportunities have been introduced since the time of the last inspection. Pupils are actively encouraged to express their own values and to respect each other's views. Friendship and co-operation are actively encouraged through group work such as playing in ensembles in class, as in year 6 work on war music. Initiatives by pupils such as raising money for people in trouble, most recently for the people of New York following the attack on the World Trade Centre, are actively encouraged. Pupils learn to understand other children's needs through the 'Inclusion Project', when they work with children from two local schools for pupils who have special educational needs. Pupils are regularly given the chance to take responsibility within the class, and year 6 pupils undertake a range of duties such as

collecting registers, operating the CD player and overhead projector in assembly and putting chairs away when the session ends. Pupils are also actively encouraged to consider values such as helpfulness and politeness. In a year 2 literacy lesson, for example, pupils were made aware of being polite when *The Tiger Who Came To Tea* thanks the family as he leaves the house.

34 The school's work to promote inclusiveness includes appreciation of cultural diversity through displays of different religions, customs, celebrations and languages though this could be given a higher profile on some occasions. Opportunities are taken to provide experiences of different types of music by arranging visiting musicians, including steel bands and also through pieces chosen to support assembly themes. Pupils are encouraged to take part in projects organised by the local secondary school such as *The Power and The Spirit* which promoted dance. However, within the day-to-day planned curriculum opportunities to appreciate and make music are underdeveloped and there are no regular extra-curricular musical activities. Similarly, planned work in art and dance makes a limited contribution to pupils' cultural development but there are no regular out-of-hours arts activities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35 The governors and staff of Little Heath Primary take good care of all their pupils. As a result of this the school is a safe and secure place for everyone. First aid arrangements are good, with at least one fully trained first aider on-site throughout the school day. The governors and headteacher regularly carry out safety inspections of the whole school. Risk assessments for events such as educational visits follow local authority recommendations and procedures. Child protection arrangements are in place. They include links with all the appropriate local agencies.

36 Arrangements for monitoring attendance and punctuality are good and the school is trying hard to improve attendance levels which at the moment are well below national averages. The principal causes of this problem are the low attendance of a small number of pupils and pupils who are taken on extended in-term family visits overseas. The school is working with the education welfare officer to tackle the first of these. The governors and headteacher, whilst understanding and accepting cultural and family needs, warn parents of the detrimental effect on pupils' learning and development, of long periods away from their school.

37 The school has a comprehensive and well-established approach to behaviour, bullying and discipline. A system of sanctions and rewards operates across the whole school. The school's code of conduct is on multi-language posters throughout the school and every class has its own rules which pupils have had a hand in developing. Good behaviour is encouraged and any bad behaviour that does occur is dealt with quickly and fairly.

38 Teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses and are well aware of their intellectual, cultural and emotional needs. They pay great attention to pupils' personal development and ensure that all those who have special educational needs have the support and tuition that they need. Arrangements to support those for whom English is an additional language are very good. Teachers help their pupils learn and develop their self-esteem by rewarding their achievements. In class, for example, pupils are congratulated when they do well. Longer-term achievements are recognised at events such as the Friday praise assemblies when the whole school celebrates individual pupils' successes.

39 Since the previous inspection, when procedures were criticised, Little Heath has improved its assessment systems. There is a clear and comprehensive assessment policy.

Overall the assessment procedures are now good as far as monitoring of pupils' progress is concerned. They are having a satisfactory impact on planning.

40 Reception pupils' knowledge, skills and abilities are checked soon after they arrive in school and the results of these tests, together with regular monitoring of their achievements, are used to plan groups' and individual pupils' progress and sort out activities. In the rest of the school a range of regular assessments, including reading tests and the results of national tests at the end of year 2 and year 6 are being used to monitor progress. The system is most advanced in English and mathematics where computer-based records are being used to track individual pupils' progress and support the school's continuing efforts to raise standards. The system is intended to link in with target setting for individual pupils but it has yet to achieve this. Its use is less advanced in science and other subjects such as history, geography and ICT.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41 Parents are pleased to send their children to Little Heath Primary. They believe that the school is a happy, secure, tolerant, multi-racial community in which their children are able to learn and mature. They admire and have confidence in the headteacher and staff. They believe that everyone at Little Heath works hard to ensure that all pupils, whatever their needs, beliefs, culture and first language, are cared for and make progress. Parents feel that their school has improved since the time of the previous inspection.

42 Formal documents such as the prospectus and governors' annual report are well produced and contain up-to-date information, which fulfils legal requirements. Other documents such as regular newsletters and notices outside classrooms keep parents up to date with day-to-day events and what is going in the classroom.

43 Reception pupils and their parents are welcomed in to Little Heath's community through visits before actually starting school. There are briefing sessions for parents and informative booklets.

44 The school runs well-attended workshop sessions, which help parents understand what their children are learning and how they are being taught. An example of this was an afternoon meeting about year 2 mathematics. Eighteen parents attended, including some for whom English is an additional language, who were helped by interpreters.

45 Little Heath's formal arrangements for keeping parents informed of their children's progress include a meeting each term with class teachers and a comprehensive end of year report that provide parents with information on how pupils can improve. The last meeting takes place just after the reports have been sent home and parents and teachers therefore have an excellent opportunity to review progress and plan for the future. The meetings are well attended and special arrangements are made for those parents who have difficulty attending.

46 In addition to formal meetings the headteacher is always available for parents who wish to see him and welcomes constructive suggestions. An example of this is the recent introduction, at parents' request, of a school uniform. Class teachers are nearly always available at the beginning and end of the school day for consultation.

47 The governors, headteacher and staff encourage parents to become involved in all aspects of school life. Some are employed as teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors and some work in the school voluntarily. There is no parent-teacher association but willing

parents are always on-hand to help with school trips and activities. Parents also attend praise assemblies and special events such as the annual harvest celebration.

48 The majority of parents support Little Heath's home-school agreement. They are keen to help their children learn and where possible listen to reading and encourage their children to do their homework. They particularly appreciate the school's three homework clubs and are concerned that for the moment at least a reduction in resources means that one of them is over-subscribed. The school is at the early stages of an initiative, which involves working with parents to improve the impact that homework has on pupils' learning. It includes targeting the particular needs of pupils for whom English is a second language.

49 Some parents are concerned about playtime arrangements. They feel that because all the pupils are mixed together, younger ones are sometimes knocked over by more boisterous older ones. The inspection team agrees with this concern. A very small number of parents report that there is some bullying, including racist name-calling. The inspection team looked into this. No bullying was seen during the course of the inspection. The school has very well established systems for dealing with bullying and racism which, as far as can be established, tackle any problems which are brought to the attention of the headteacher and other staff.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50 Little Heath School is well led. The headteacher and senior staff have a clear idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses, where it is and in which direction it needs to be moved. Strategic planning embodied in the school development plan has both immediate objectives and longer-term aims. The development plan is worked on initially by the headteacher, who takes account of the local education authority development plan, the Coventry EAZ development plan and the school's performance review. School initiatives and priorities are included at this stage also. The plan is shared with the senior management team and governors. Staff also receive a copy of the draft plan so that they are aware of the part they may have within it. The school improvement team has been devised specifically to monitor and report on standards in school and day-to-day learning. The senior staff are not complacent about standards that are low compared to those obtained nationally. As a result they have good data relating to pupil progress and this is used to produce targets for pupils' attainment both as individuals and as groups. The management of the school sees the ethnic diversity of its intake as a bonus and this is reflected in the inclusive philosophy of the school. This inclusion stretches to pupils, parents and a range of partner schools providing a rich learning experience for the whole school community. The integration of pupils whose parents are described as refugees or asylum speakers is a strength of the school.

51 The governing body is effective in carrying out its various roles. It is currently below its full capacity and the spare places need to be filled and then individual governor's responsibilities need to be reviewed. The strength of the governing body comes from its committee structure, which is based on working parties, and the commitment of those involved. Parent governors operate a surgery for parents after school once per week where parents can come and air their views or ask questions. Governors are kept up to date with regular financial statements and reviews of the budget. An unusually high carry over-figure of 13 per cent in the 1999-2000 period was a result of strategic planning to make improvements to existing teaching areas and to extend ICT provision to include class based computers as well as those in the suite. The carry-over figure for 2000 and 2001 is reduced to a more average 5 per cent. Governors have good systems in place to oversee both payments and the transfer of money between budget categories. The school has responded to the latest audit report which only had minor suggestions for improvement. This reflects the high standards of day-to-day administration by office staff. Governors are aware of the low

standards in attainment, but are justifiably proud of the Schools' Achievement Award for improved results in 1999 and 2000.

52 The improvement in teaching since the last inspection has come about at least in part as a result of the monitoring procedures that involve the headteacher, senior staff and local authority advisers. Information from this monitoring has also been used to provide information for the appraisal of staff. Subject co-ordinators provide leadership in relevant areas of the curriculum. Some are relatively new and are learning the role from good models such as the co-ordinator for special educational needs. The SEN co-ordinator is very organised and keeps effective and detailed records of pupils' development, involving parents appropriately. Teachers use pupils' individual education plans well to identify targets and provide a suitable curriculum. Support staff are highly effective, demonstrating a clear understanding of pupils' needs in every class and subject. All staff work closely with language support teachers, to identify the main cause of pupils' difficulties. The school is involved in a locally funded Inclusion Project, working with two neighbouring special schools for children with significant special educational needs. The positive impact on children's personal development is very evident.

53 It is quite clear that the whole school community shares a common view that the school has made good progress since the last inspection and has become a calmer, more purposeful institution where pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make progress. The school's involvement in the Coventry EAZ is just one example of a range of relationships that the school uses to improve its all-round provision. Links with a local 'beacon' school have helped to improve standards in writing. Many of the school's links bring with them some extra funding for specific purposes. This may take the form of extra staff such as an ICT technician or equipment such as the use of an interactive white board. These extra funds and resources are well used to extend the school's effectiveness. The school has a generous number of teachers, several of whom are used to provide support for pupils who have English as an additional language or special educational needs. These specialist teachers are aided by classroom assistants whose contribution is a major factor in the overall effectiveness of the school. The specialist knowledge and skills of staff merges with good teaching to help many pupils to make good progress. This quality provision results from the nature of those involved, but also from the management of resources, arrangements for training and the strategic planning that has acknowledged its value and then been committed to maintaining what is expensive, but absolutely necessary support.

54 Resources are generally satisfactory. The school has identified priorities such as computers that have resulted in much improved standards since the last inspection. In other areas such as literacy and design and technology there are some shortcomings that the school needs to address.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55 Though the school has made good progress since the last inspection it needs to continue to raise standards in core subjects and improve progress in some foundation subjects.

Raise standards in English by:

- developing pupils' speaking skills by increasing opportunities to talk in pairs and groups of different sizes;
- assessing reading skills more precisely and matching texts to individual needs;
- ensuring that all reading sessions have a clear focus to help pupils to progress;
- encouraging accuracy in writing by marking work more effectively;
- planning to use literacy skills across the curriculum more systematically.

Raise standards in mathematics by:

- developing pupils' mathematical vocabulary, providing opportunities for them to articulate their methods and reasoning whilst improving their ability to calculate mentally and recall number facts;
- encouraging a greater appreciation of mathematical pattern;
- increasing opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge in investigative work;
- planning to use mathematical skills in other areas of the curriculum.

Raise standards in science by:

- using assessments at the end of topics analytically to test pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Improve progress in:

- art, by developing units of work that enable pupils to build up their skills more systematically;
- design and technology, by producing a scheme of work that ensures that skills are developed progressively;
- music, by improving teachers' expertise and providing a wider range of opportunities to make and enjoy music.

56 In addition governors may wish to consider the following minor issue:

- improving playground facilities to allow some separation of activities.

Provision for pupils who have English as an additional language

57 The school makes very effective provision for pupils whose first language is not English. Fifty-six per cent of pupils in the school speak English as an additional language. They make good progress in their learning in all key stages, including those children newly arrived in this country.

58 Teaching and the work of support assistants is good, sometimes exceptionally so. Adults work their way through tasks with the children carefully, focusing on appropriate vocabulary and consolidating information. They use information from assessment tasks, undertaken as soon as children are admitted to the school, to direct their teaching strategies and content, giving pupils a survival vocabulary but extending it appropriately to move learning on quickly. Bilingual assistants translate when it is appropriate to do so, and mother tongue speakers are brought in to aid early assessment and give confidence to the children.

59 Teachers and support staff are funded by the local education authority and by national grants. Deployment of the staff is strictly on the basis of children's needs, identified through school assessment and tracking procedures, and negotiated through staff discussion. Teachers analyse pupils' achievements. There is currently no specific tracking and analysis of children's mathematical language development, though this could be very helpful in monitoring and promoting pupils' progress.

60 An initiative introduced this term to involve and include parents whose first language is not English is proving to be very effective in supporting pupils' personal and social development and learning.

61 Resources provided by the school and the local education authority are adequate, but there are no ICT resources. More could be done to reflect the diverse ethnic mix in the school population in displays and notices around the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

52

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

49

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	59	29	6	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		207
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		75

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		77

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	109

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	34
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	90.3
National comparative data	94.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	14	9	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	12	10
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	17	19	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (65)	83 (62)	74 (81)
	National	83(82)	84 (83)	90(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	10	11
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	18	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (62)	74 (76)	78 (92)
	National	84 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	19	4	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	2	2	3
	Total	13	13	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (50)	57 (39)	65 (57)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	12
	Girls	2	2	2
	Total	13	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	57 (50)	61 (46)	61 (57)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	57
Pakistani	12
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	84
Any other minority ethnic group	22

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	10	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	207
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	213

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
	£
Total income	485345
Total expenditure	460040
Expenditure per pupil	2223
Balance brought forward from previous year	42371
Balance carried forward to next year	67676

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	196
Number of questionnaires returned	11

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	27			
My child is making good progress in school.	45	36	18		9
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	27	27	9	
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	36	18		
The teaching is good.	36	45	9		9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	45	18		
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	27	9		
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	27	9		
The school works closely with parents.	45	27	18		9
The school is well led and managed.	45	36	9		9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	45	9		
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	40			20

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

62 The standard of provision for children in the Foundation Stage continues to be good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. The good teaching and productive teamwork of the staff involves all pupils and has a positive impact on their learning.

63 Children enter school with widely varying early experiences, and many with poorly developed skills in the vital areas of language and mathematical development. This is confirmed by the early assessments carried out during the first few weeks in school. Despite the good quality teaching in the class, only the highest achieving children will attain the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development by the time children move to year 1. In the areas of personal and social and physical development, most children's attainment on admission to the school is similar to that expected of a four-year-old child. The majority of children are likely to attain the early learning goals in those areas by the end of their reception year. Most children make steady progress through the year.

64 About half the class do not speak English as their first language, ten per cent having arrived in this country very recently from different lands. A similar percentage have special educational needs, and several display speech problems. The school has very good language support mechanisms and effective links with all local support agencies. The class teacher is able to identify children's needs quickly and to establish and implement appropriate learning provision for these children, enabling them to make good progress. Teaching is consistently good and it is made even more effective by the work of support staff. Children learn well and those who have English as an additional language progress quickly.

Personal and social development

65 There is a good induction process for new reception children and most of them enter school with a positive and confident attitude, able to take full advantage of the secure and caring environment created by the staff. By the time they leave the reception class they are achieving the early learning goals in this area.

66 After only two weeks of full-time schooling, children separate easily from their parents and carers, and follow the routines and organisation of the classroom with apparent delight. The staff ensure that every child feels included, regularly making reference to the equality of each individual and the impact that actions have on others. The teacher and the bilingual assistants further promote children's security by their spontaneous use of mother tongue words and phrases to assist children around the classroom. This also enables children to become aware of other cultures. All children therefore feel valued and comfortable. This is reflected in the very good behaviour at all times in the classroom and around the school, and the strong sense of enjoyment there. Children know what is expected of them when working at tables or choosing activities, clearing up well and helping each other. They show a well-developed independence when selecting and replacing equipment. Acts of kindness are appropriately praised, for instance when a child offered her prized 'home-corner' label to a classmate voluntarily. All children are confidently able to join the rest of the school at playtime and lunchtime, and in daily assemblies in the school hall, further reinforcing their sense of community.

67 Children mostly demonstrate good concentration when playing with chosen activities, and when completing more formal tasks such as matching groups of objects or sequencing

pictures. Because of the poor language skills of many of the children there is little interaction during these sessions, but most of them want to share their success with an interested adult. Everyone is treated with courtesy and respect by the staff, providing good role models for the children. Children's ability to pay attention and respond at the end of a long morning is exceptional, reflecting the appropriate management strategies used by the teacher to maintain interest, for example by pretending that she had given the wrong answer when sequencing numbers to five. This shows improvement since the last inspection. Humour at the children's level is a regular feature of carpet sessions.

68 Opportunities to explore outside the classroom are limited at present because of the unsatisfactory state of the outdoor play area, but there is challenge in the physical equipment provided there, with an appropriate element of risk for children to overcome on the slide and wheeled toys. Children also enjoy learning to take turns there, with adult supervision to aid this and help them sort out any conflicts.

69 The teacher has a thorough knowledge of the developmental needs of her class, keeping careful daily notes of each child's progress and setting targets in her planning for specific children. This contributes effectively to children's learning during these early days of term.

Communication, language and literacy

70 Most children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning during their reception year. Because many are admitted with poorly developed language and communication skills, few are likely to achieve all the early learning goals in this area by the end of the year, despite generally good teaching.

71 All children listen attentively to their teachers. They enjoy answering in the lively questioning sessions on the carpet, and respond easily to adults during individual or group activities. Some are beginning to give each other more complex directions to support their teacher's instructions, such as 'It was tidy up time so you should ov put that away', and others use simple statements – 'they gone out there'- accompanied by actions to make their point. A few use only single words, naming objects such as fire engine and aeroplane in their play. All children attempt to join in with newly learned nursery rhymes, and chant familiar phrases in stories. Many, however, play alongside each other with little direct conversation, rarely questioning or sharing experiences with their peers. Teachers encourage extension of children's games with timely enquiries about, for example, the state of the dinner in the home corner. This stimulates play appropriately, but teachers' roles are generally supervisory over play routines as they concentrate on planned learning activities such as literacy or numeracy tasks. The lack of more structured adult intervention, where teachers and assistants play with the children, is limiting children's opportunities to benefit from the good role models their teachers provide in improving their language skills. It also restricts opportunities for teachers to monitor children's learning in these areas of play.

72 Once children are settled in, they are given a reading book to take home each day. Many children are already familiar with the characters of the school's reading scheme, recognising them without picture clues, showing good progress since admission. They enjoy listening to stories and sharing books with adults, and all children show a good grasp of the story line in their reading books. Children with English as an additional language are able to identify the main thrust of a story with appropriate single words, lots of facial expressions and gestures. All children are making good progress in recognising their own names, with frequent planned opportunities during the day to find their names for appropriate purposes such as tracing or recording their attendance. Higher achieving children laugh at the humour in books as they read with their teacher, and children with special educational needs talk happily about their favourite 'Tweenie' books at home. Elements of the Literacy Framework

are used increasingly as the reception year continues, incorporating assessment requirements into appropriate sessions of word, sentence and text level work. By the end of the year, most children are familiar with all initial letter sounds, and higher achievers are able to use this to build simple three letter words successfully. They read familiar texts fluently, and with satisfactory understanding. They make good progress in the mechanics of reading. In the early stages of the reception year, however, there is too much emphasis on more formal elements of teaching at the expense of exploratory, active learning, and children sometimes sit for overlong sessions at tables.

73 By the end of the year higher achieving children are beginning to write simple sentences unaided, and sometimes to use full stops and capital letters. Newly admitted reception children enjoy trying to write their names, although very few can do so in a recognisable form yet. A good supply of writing resources enables children to practise pencil control, which they use in free play sessions to write 'letters' to their families.

Mathematical development

74 On admission to the school, most children have very poor mathematical learning. The curriculum is appropriately planned to develop the key skills of mathematics, and children make satisfactory progress. However, most do not achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year.

75 Good teaching strategies encourage children to think about numbers and sequencing in many of the group or whole-class sessions during the day, giving appropriate emphasis to this learning. Children are able to count the ducks or teddies in finger rhymes, and with help point to the number of children present on a number line. In cooking sessions they count and measure ingredients, and free choice activities include a variety of shape games that staff use skilfully to develop an awareness of the language of position. This is enhanced when children play on the slide, counting their ascent of the steps until they are 'higher' than the teacher. The teacher encourages an awareness of number operations and language by, for instance, asking children to count each other on the carpet, then adding more to the group and asking how many altogether? There is an overuse of worksheets during the reception year, limiting opportunities to reinforce the learning of mathematical language in a practical context.

76 Children whose first language is not English are well supported by classroom assistants who translate concepts for them. Teachers with specific responsibility for English as an additional language assist effectively with assessments in mother tongue languages. Children with special educational needs have targeted help enabling them to make good progress across the year.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

77 Children are admitted to the reception class with a wide variety of learning, but many lack the language skills and experience to build effectively on that knowledge. Most are unlikely to achieve the early learning goals in this area by the end of the reception year in spite of generally good teaching.

78 All the children demonstrate a curiosity about their world, finding interesting objects such as feathers and stones to bring into the classroom. Good planning and provision enables them to enjoy sorting farm animals into different groups, and vehicles into cars and aeroplanes. They investigate construction equipment, joining different pieces together and testing the effectiveness of the joint by shaking their model vigorously. Much of this play is repetitive at present as children explore their new environment and practise new skills. The children are interested in how things work, but few are yet able to enquire about why things

happen. Adults encourage them to think about this by providing a variety of materials and equipment for free choice, and then questioning children appropriately as they play. A walk around the school grounds enabled staff to talk about the changes to the trees during autumn, and to compare the colours of the leaves as children hunted for objects beginning with 'h' for their literacy task. They could talk briefly about that on their return.

79 There are many good opportunities for children to find things out for themselves, with adults giving appropriate support and encouragement, such as finding suitable resources to represent a fire hose. Many children use the computer with confidence, moving the mouse to erase the screen and then drawing their own pictures. Some are able to draw and name an apple after the teacher reminds children of their previous week's learning. A few children choose to listen to taped stories operating the tape recorder themselves, and many enjoy playing in the telephone box or 'talking' on the mobile phone, encouraged by the teacher, for example asking if there is a message for her. There are plans to improve the outdoor area so that children can explore their environment safely and effectively, but at present there is little opportunity for children to explore the natural world independently. In the spring children plant seeds in the classroom, record the growth of plants and learn to label the main parts of a flower.

Physical development

80 The many good opportunities for children to develop independence have a marked impact on their physical development, enabling most children to achieve the early learning goals in this area by the time they move on to year 1. Children demonstrate high self-esteem and confidence, and so are willing to take appropriate risks as they climb, ride tricycles, practise batting a ball against a wall and run about outside, as most four-year-old children can do. With encouragement from an adult most children can adjust their speed to avoid others, and change direction quickly, although this is less evident during a more formal physical education lesson than it is in the outdoor play area. Good training since admission to the class enables children to show real awareness of the need for space when setting out their building equipment, and they are able to run backwards and forwards successfully when playing outside. Their cutting skills are well developed, and are used to good effect in making story sequencing books. They hold pencils with a reasonably mature grip, and most are able to make deliberate marks on paper to represent their intentions. Self-portraits show care and control with paint brushes, producing a pleasing and recognisable outcome. There are daily opportunities for children to use spatulas and glue. When tidying boxes of equipment away, many show an understanding of appropriate size and space, reflecting good teaching since admission. Adults ask children to demonstrate number values with their fingers, promoting manipulative skill development during mathematical sessions. Hand printing extends this learning further, as children work out how to ensure that every digit prints satisfactorily.

81 The safe use of equipment is underlined effectively in home corner activities, when over-zealous use of a plastic knife causes an upset. This gives the teacher an appropriate opportunity to talk with the class about safety, many children joining in with her when emphasising the classroom rules.

Creative development

82 Children enter the school with low levels of attainment in this area of learning, and with limited language skills to help them develop their imaginations. Despite steady progress, most children are unlikely to achieve the early learning goals in this area by the end of the reception year.

83 At this early stage of the term, while children are still learning routines and exploring exciting new equipment, opportunities are limited for them to reflect and develop ideas. Most children are still at the stage of enjoying all the activities in the secure and happy environment around them. As the year progresses, planning for the class covers mixing colours, collage work, building models from large and small boxes and appropriate activities to develop children's senses. Already, children have experienced sponge printing, and seen their work displayed as trees and characters on a 'Bear Hunt' picture. They join in nursery rhymes eagerly, and follow instructions on a movement tape. In school assembly, they watch with interest as a spiral of candles is lit. Their imaginations are appropriately stimulated as they close their eyes to listen to evocative flute music, then follow a picture journey through space. They learn to join in school hymns, but there is little adult support and guidance during practice sessions to help them achieve well from this activity. Similarly in role-play sessions, there is little adult intervention to move learning on. There is a widely diverse cultural mix in the class, but there is little celebration of this in displays or activities.

ENGLISH

84 Test results for 2000 show standards of attainment to be well below average at the age of seven and below average at the age of 11 compared with schools nationally, but current work is judged to be well below average in both year 2 and year 6. Compared with similar schools, though, reading test scores were below average by the end of the infants but writing was well above; by the end of the juniors results were above average. Test results in the infants rose steadily between 1997 and 2000, and the overall trend in the juniors was broadly in line with that nationally. The results fell significantly in 2001, and the school failed to meet its target by 19 per cent, but as this group of pupils did poorly (being in the lowest five per cent nationally) in their Key Stage 1 tests, this was not unexpected. Boys and girls attain similarly over the longer term.

85 At the age of seven pupils' speaking and listening skills are below average. Although most pupils will willingly contribute to discussion, their contributions are often limited, responses are not always apt and they often find it difficult to pronounce words which are new to them. Some year 2 pupils, for instance, cannot formulate a question and make a statement instead as when given the opportunity in a religious education lesson to ask about the Sikh gurus. Others find it difficult to extend their ideas to answer in a sentence. Most pupils have a limited vocabulary and have difficulty thinking of the right word or understanding the exact meaning of words they hear. Higher attaining pupils are able to speak confidently, and enter enthusiastically into role-play as Sophie or her father when they enact the conversation between these characters from *The Tiger Who Came to Tea*. Pupils with English as an additional language and special educational needs quickly develop their speaking and listening skills with the help of bilingual support staff and most are contributing confidently by the end of the infants.

86 By the age of 11 pupils' speaking has continued to develop, but average and lower attaining pupils rarely speak at length and many still have a relatively limited vocabulary. As a result, they find it difficult to use speech to explore their thoughts and reason through problems. When pressed to answer quickly many pupils resort to short phrases and one word answers. If they do not understand something they cannot always find the words to ask for clarification or further explanation, whereas higher attainers readily pose questions and can understand nuances and subtle differences.

87 Reading is well below average by the age of seven because few pupils have the expected skills. Higher attaining pupils do have skills to work out unknown words by using letter sounds, picture cues and knowledge of common words, and they understand the story line enough to predict what might happen next. However, most pupils are still at an early

stage in beginning to make sense of the printed word. They can use some letter sounds, look for obvious clues in a picture and know some common words like 'the' and 'and'. When reading with the class they can join in with some of the story and understand enough to recall what happened, although often not in a logical order. A significant minority of pupils are still unsure what a word is, do not consistently look at the text from top to bottom and right to left or use letter sounds when reading independently. Nevertheless, because of the school's provision, most pupils are enthusiastic about reading and enjoy stories even though tackling texts is difficult, and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Many of the pupils in the year 1 class are already reading more accurately and confidently than pupils in year 2.

88 The difference in attainment in reading skills of pupils by 11 is even wider and the proportion of pupils who can read at the expected level is low. Higher attaining pupils are able to read children's fiction fluently and expressively, and any errors are plausible. They can use their knowledge of context to work out the meaning of unknown vocabulary and have sound understanding of an extended story. However, few pupils can infer or deduce implicit ideas, and few have the skills to access appropriate books from the library and locate information by skimming and scanning chosen texts. Average attainers often read monotonously and are likely to make careless errors such as ignoring essential punctuation. These hinder pupils' comprehension and pupils are also hampered by not being able to use context to work out meanings of words outside their spoken vocabulary. Lower attainers are often reading at the expected level for infant pupils and still need to use letter sounds and pictures to make sense of the text. While pupils with special educational needs are able to apply such skills readily, those lower attaining pupils who do not receive extra support but are still at an early stage in reading often struggle to recall appropriate strategies. As at Key Stage 1 most pupils retain an interest in reading and a willingness to tackle books despite the demands this makes on them.

89 The relatively better results in writing are the result of pupils' confidence in making attempts at writing for themselves. By the age of seven all but the lowest attainers are already willing to try to write a sentence independently. They write for a variety of purposes and know that it is an essential skill for learning and communication. The higher attainers are able to express their thoughts logically in sentences, sometimes correctly demarcated by full stops and capital letters. Spellings of simple common words are often correct. Average attainers can write some relevant sentences using occasional full stops and capital letters. They apply their knowledge of letter sounds to convey what they want to write even if it is not the correct spelling. Lower attainers use prompts and copy words provided by adults to write simple sentences, often after discussing what they will write beforehand. Handwriting is poor even for higher attaining pupils. Words often contain capital letters, letters are inconsistent in size and writing is not on the lines.

90 By the age of 11 writing continues to be willingly attempted but often inaccurate. Pupils are aware of a basic structure in writing of different types, especially the need for a beginning, a middle and an ending for their stories, and have experienced many different purposes and styles. However, only the higher attainers use punctuation reliably and even then few use speech marks or paragraphs regularly and consistently. Not all average and lower attainers use full stops and capital letters confidently. Many pupils have problems with correct grammar and use plural nouns with singular verbs or mix tenses within a sentence. Spelling, even of longer everyday words, is often inaccurate. Higher attainers attempt to use interesting vocabulary and to add interest by using adjectives and adverbs such as powerful verbs to create mystery in their introductions to *The Water Tower* story in year 5's literacy lesson. But efforts to produce detailed description are seldom sustained by average attaining pupils and few pupils regularly write at length by extending their ideas effectively. Handwriting remains a weakness in the juniors and presentation is often poor because of crossings out and changes of style within any piece. Letters are not often of a consistent size

and correctly and fluently joined. Most pupils continue to write in pencil and these implements are frequently too soft and too blunt to produce neat and pleasing work.

91 The progress made by most pupils is regular and steady. They often take a long time to acquire skills and need a great deal of practice before these are well grounded. Understanding is often slowly achieved; much repetition is required so that a concept is met in a variety of circumstances. If a skill is not sufficiently practised it slips out of use and has to be re-learnt. As a result pupils with English as an additional language and special educational needs often make better progress than their peers because support staff regularly rehearse and revisit essential skills with these pupils to enable them to consolidate their learning. The lower attainers who are not supported often make least progress, especially when transferring from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2, where basic reading skills are not such a regular focus. Learning in lessons, although rarely less than satisfactory, is frequently not as rapid as would be expected because it is assumed that pupils will be able to recall previous work. In year 6, for example, many pupils do not remember how to apply alphabetical order to find the word 'trust' in the thesaurus during a religious education lesson and start from the beginning of the 't' section.

92 Overall the teaching of English has improved since the last inspection. It is now consistently good in the infants and year 6, but some unsatisfactory lessons occur in the lower juniors. In the best lessons there is effective teamwork to ensure all pupils make progress. Class teachers, the 'booster' teacher and English as an additional language support staff share the responsibility effectively by modelling, assessing and intervening at appropriate intervals to identify and meet the diverse individual needs. In a year 1 literacy lesson, for instance, the class was split for practice of alphabetical order so that the work was appropriate, the support teacher dealt with the non-fiction text while the class teacher assessed pupils' responses and all four adults led separate groups for the activity. Less successful lessons fail to use the skills of the knowledgeable support staff. The better lessons are characterised by careful questioning to enable pupils to express themselves clearly and fully, sometimes using devices such as preparing answers in pairs. In Key Stage 1 basic skills are regularly taught and constantly reinforced even in lessons where the main focus is not on these, so pupils practise, for example, letter sounds throughout the day. The weaker lessons start with introductions that are too long and fail to focus on the objective of the lesson so pupils lose concentration and do not learn the main principles being introduced or developed. Too little support is subsequently provided for some pupils so that they are unable to make much progress against the objective set. Pupils in the Key Stage 1 classes often receive immediate useful feedback about their strengths and improvements and those areas where they need to pay more attention following the year 2 spelling test. Written comments on Key Stage 2 work, although often encouraging, are not followed through sufficiently so that the element criticised is improved. Many pupils receive comments about presentation but the work continues to be untidy and ill-written weeks later. Moreover, where errors of spelling or grammar are indicated pupils often fail to respond or copy out the correct word but make the same mistake again. Expectations in lessons are often high in the infants and year 6 with pupils taking notice of and fulfilling the guidance given and being praised accordingly, but expectations are not always as explicit and so rigorously pursued in less satisfactory lessons.

93 The co-ordinator is working hard to raise standards by gathering evidence from assessment data, discussing good practice with the local 'beacon school' and attending relevant courses. She is aware, for example, of the importance of suitable reading material and is graduating 'free reading' books to improve progress. But much remains to be done even within this area as books currently labelled 'quick reads' are actually too complex for most Little Heath pupils to read readily. Assessment of reading skills and associated records are not providing the required information on progress. Writing has a low profile in the school and is seldom celebrated and good work is seldom used as exemplars. Although pupils write

regularly across the curriculum in the infants, they do not develop these skills in the juniors. ICT is used effectively to support literacy in year 1, but its potential for providing practice for lower attaining pupils and extending higher attainers has still to be explored. Much time is devoted to English including many sessions additional to the literacy hour. Some of these are useful for developing skills in spelling and phonics, but lack of structure and focus in some junior reading sessions makes little contribution to pupils' progress.

MATHEMATICS

94 Standards at the end of each key stage are well below the national averages. This is similar to the results in tests carried out in 2000. In Key Stage 1 results were very low and in Key Stage 2 they were well below the national average. The quality of learning is satisfactory throughout the school.

95 The majority of pupils enter Key Stage 1 with mathematical skills that are lower than those expected for pupils of this age. Most make satisfactory progress as they move through Key Stage 1 even though the proportion achieving the national standard remains well below average. This satisfactory progress is maintained at Key Stage 2 although attainment is still well below the national average. In all parts of the school pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are sensitively and effectively supported and such pupils make good progress. Overall, the quality of learning is satisfactory in both key stages.

96 The school places considerable emphasis upon mathematics and there is proper attention to the development of sound understanding of mathematical principles. Many pupils enter the school with limited language skills and the school works hard to extend their vocabulary and enrich their experience. A focus upon key mathematical words is routinely included in lessons. Nevertheless, many pupils lack assurance when assimilating new concepts and it requires consistently good teaching to ensure reasonable learning. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils can count to 100 and beyond and can mentally add and subtract numbers to 10 and beyond. The proportion who are beginning to understand place value, can use some of the multiplication tables, can employ the appropriate operation when calculating and can understand halves and quarters is, however, well below the average. A majority can identify the common two and three-dimensional shapes and can describe some of their features and properties but the range of knowledge is limited. Many require additional support in order to collect information systematically and to construct simple graphs to illustrate their findings. Pupils are beginning to use standard and non-standard measures of weight, capacity and length but their understanding and skills are well below average. A less than average proportion is able to make independent decisions as they use and apply their mathematics to solve problems.

97 By the end of Key Stage 2 the proportion of pupils able to add, subtract, multiply and divide with expected competence and accuracy is well below the average. Pupils' understanding of decimals, fractions and percentages is less than expected. Most can name a limited range of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and have some appreciation of their various features and properties. The higher achievers are beginning to understand the concept of angle as a measurement of turn. Pupils are able to collect and interpret data and to use a range of graphical representation but the depth and range of analysis is below that expected. The number who can apply mathematics to different situations is well below average.

98 In both key stages pupils make satisfactory use of their mathematical knowledge in other subjects. There is good use of ICT to support learning. There is some emphasis on the importance of mathematical pattern although opportunities to extend this aspect of the

subject into an aesthetic appreciation and to generate excitement through the exploration of such patterns are insufficiently developed. Opportunities for pupils to show initiative in open-ended investigations are also somewhat restricted.

99 The quality of teaching is good at both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Because many pupils experience difficulty in the more subtle aspects of the English language, teachers have to work hard to ensure that concepts are understood and that satisfactory learning occurs. Teachers are conscientious in the support which they provide and display awareness of the individual needs of their pupils. Lessons focus sharply upon promoting underlying mathematical understanding and teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. A good range of activities, to support learning and help to sustain interest, are used. The recommendations contained in the National Numeracy Strategy material are properly reflected in the structure of lessons. Sound planning contains the precise objectives of the lesson. When these are shared with pupils it helps to create a sense of purpose and achievement. In the better lessons the need for pupils to articulate their mathematical reasoning is well understood and is used effectively to help deepen language and mathematical understanding. These qualities were well exemplified in a good lesson for year 4 pupils relating to mental strategies which could be used to solve subtraction problems. Here the mathematical expertise of the teacher, her thorough planning and organisation and her ability to involve all the pupils combined to promote sound progress.

100 The co-ordinator provides committed leadership for mathematics and the school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy with commitment and rigour. All teachers have a clear understanding of the rationale of the Numeracy Strategy, which is properly reflected in planning and lessons. The effectiveness of lessons has been carefully monitored. The thoroughness with which the Numeracy Strategy has been introduced together with the consistently good quality of the teaching has had a direct and positive influence upon the learning and standards in both key stages.

101 Teachers know their pupils well and this enables them to assess day-to-day progress accurately and to respond meaningfully. A good range of formal tests is used to monitor individual progress and results are thoughtfully analysed so that the strengths and weaknesses of the programme can be identified. These procedures are relatively new and the information gained should become increasingly useful in determining what should be taught next. Overall, the procedures for assessing pupils' work and their influence over what is taught next are good.

102 The previous Ofsted report found that there was unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and drew attention to some unsatisfactory teaching in both key stages. A shortage of mathematical resources was identified. All these issues have been properly and effectively addressed. Raising standards in mathematics was a key issue in the previous report and, whilst attainment has not yet 'caught up' with improvements nationally, progress is now more uniform and teaching is consistently good. Overall, there has been a good response to the shortcomings identified at the time of the last inspection.

SCIENCE

103 At the time of the last inspection standards were below national averages. Progress in Key Stage 1 was 'slow' and unsatisfactory in parts of Key Stage 2. Standards remain below national averages in both key stages, but progress has improved and is now satisfactory throughout the school. The progress made by pupils who have English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs is good. Although pupils' attainment is roughly below national expectations in knowledge and understanding of the world, by the end of reception children's literacy and numeracy skills are low and for those

who have English as an additional language science presents greater than average problems in conceptual understanding. Nevertheless, because of skilful teaching and support from learning support teachers and assistants, many of the problems are overcome and pupils do make good progress. For instance in year 1 support staff interpret, explain and develop pupils' vocabulary and language as the teacher asks the class to think about the development of humans from baby to toddler and young child.

104 Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate that attainment in science is below the national average, but more able pupils do reach higher than average levels of attainment. Some of them are pupils for whom English is an additional language, reflecting the overall good progress of these pupils. At Key Stage 2 attainment in national tests is below the national average, but in line with schools deemed to be similar to Little Heath. During the period 1998 to 2000 there was a general improvement in results, with girls doing slightly better than boys on the whole. Results in 2001 have fallen from the peak of 2000. However examination of pupils' work who took the tests in 2001 shows that attainment was generally better than the results gained in national tests indicated. The work of the pupils demonstrates attainment that is above the average for eleven-year-olds in several topics. The fact that this is not reflected in test results may have something to do with pupils' response to tests generally, the fact that many pupils need readers to explain and translate written questions which slows down their performance, along with the underlying linguistic difficulties faced by pupils who have English as an additional language.

105 The quality of the science curriculum is good. Pupils cover a wide range of topics and there is clear evidence that a practical approach is taken in most science lessons. Pupils' work is threaded through with tables of results generated by experimental work. For instance pupils in year 5 look at the effect of exercise on heart rate and then use computers to produce graphs of the data. In year 1 a large body of work illustrates pupils' investigations, for instance into their sense of taste and the capacity of different types of paper to absorb water. In year 2 pupils build simple electrical circuits and consider the safety aspects of medicines at home. In Key Stage 1 early literacy skills are applied successfully in science and this is continued throughout the school. The practical approach to science runs through the work covered in Key Stage 2. Year 3 pupils consider the effects of soft drinks and vinegar on eggshells, then use these observations to consider similar effects in tooth decay. In year 4 pupils measure forces and measure temperature changes of hot water and display results as a cooling curve graph. Year 6 pupils carry out work to do with photosynthesis, food chains and ecosystems and their work demonstrates a clear understanding of terms such as 'predator' and 'habitat'. They carry out an interesting investigation into the rate at which salt dissolves in different volumes of water. They demonstrate the need to control variables and then produce line graphs of their results.

106 The quality of presentation in pupils' books varies from year group to year group. In year 6 as well the growing maturity in recording, it is clear that high standards are set by teachers. However in other year groups some unsatisfactory presentation is accepted. Teachers' marking plays a part here; in year 6 it is detailed and encourages dialogue between teacher and pupil that promotes pupils' understanding. In other year groups marking is irregular and cursory, providing no information to help pupils improve or to consider more deeply what they have learned. There are examples of ICT being used in science in data handling in particular. Opportunities to use ICT to find information and to measure changes in environmental conditions are not yet fully exploited.

107 The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is consistently good. Teachers have clear learning objectives and the teaching methods they employ ensure that their pupils are motivated and learn successfully. Class teachers involve high quality learning assistants and teachers in what appears to be a seamless approach and pupils with English as an additional language are well supported. In Key Stage 2 teaching is satisfactory overall

though it is good in year 6. However, there is some unsatisfactory teaching where the teacher's own knowledge lacks clarity. In one lesson to do with the function of muscles some confusion is caused when the teacher asks "Which bones help us to expire?" Pupils' learning is inhibited by a lack of clear objectives. The teacher's planning is more a list of what is to be said and done and pays too little attention to what is to be learned. As pupils become confused class control becomes more difficult and the quality of learning suffers.

108 To raise standards in science the examples of good teaching and insistence on high standards of presentation need to be widened further. The assessment of pupils' understanding of individual topics needs to continue but the tests should be used more analytically to identify shortcomings in pupils' learning and related teaching while at the same time making pupils even more familiar with written tests.

ART AND DESIGN

109 Attainment in both key stages is below expected levels, and progress is unsatisfactory across the school. There has been a deterioration since the last inspection report when attainment matched national expectations and progress was satisfactory.

110 Teaching was good overall in the two lessons observed during this inspection, when pupils showed very positive attitudes to their work. Good planning enabled year 5 pupils to develop their skills in using colour, line and form, as they worked collaboratively to design a still life set and then draw and paint it. The teacher offered effective guidance on the need for careful drawing, the use of appropriately sized paint brushes and how to mix colours. Pupils were able to talk about shade and tone in their pictures, and knew where improvements could be made. Excellent support was given to pupils with special educational needs, enabling them to produce work of a high quality. Children whose first language is not English contributed well to the lesson, taking an active part in their group activity when compiling a design.

111 Art lessons for year 2 children are shared weekly with visiting children from two neighbouring special schools, as part of the school's Inclusion Project. All children worked hard throughout the observed lesson, using their imagination to make jewellery from a selection of resources such as clay, Christmas decorations and scraps of material. Those making necklaces from scrap material tried different methods of arranging them before exploring the use of a needle and thread to string everything together. All children were given effective support and guidance by the many adults present, and in turn offered help and encouragement to the visiting children. They were delighted with the finished products, wearing them with pride. The lesson contributed significantly to children's spiritual and social development, particularly for those with special educational needs.

112 Drawing skills are satisfactorily developed and pupils have opportunities to paint pictures, but the curriculum is generally impoverished and this results in low standards and unsatisfactory progress. There is no evidence of pupils' knowledge of famous artists, and year 6 pupils are unable to express any opinions about art other than liking to draw. They have scant knowledge of ideas from other cultures and times. A scrutiny of sketchbooks from last year's pupils indicated that one class had explored Aboriginal art. This same group of pupils used crayons effectively to create an imaginary landscape scene. There was very little other work in books, and presentation was generally poor. Pupils have not used computer programs or the Internet to enhance their learning in art, and there is no evidence of pupils' work in, for example, clay, printing, weaving or collage. Art is included in planning documents, and the school uses the nationally produced schemes of work, but implementation of these plans is very inconsistent. The school's portfolio of pupils' work contains examples of portrait drawing only. None of these is annotated to give guidance on

learning levels or future targets. There is no coherent build-up of key skills across the school. Teachers do not record children's individual development, but teach each unit with the activities in mind rather than the learning.

113 Displays around the school are well-mounted and attractive. They generally reflect curriculum areas, and mainly comprise posters and guidance for learning. There is very little that celebrates pupils' work and achievement, or the rich cultural diversity in the school. Resources are barely adequate.

114 A new co-ordinator has been appointed this term. She is very enthusiastic, and has already begun to develop new links with the local secondary school that will greatly enhance the school's opportunities to enrich curriculum experiences in art and the arts. There is a recently updated policy containing clear guidance for teachers with equally clear criteria for the assessment and monitoring of individual progress. Additional facilities are planned in the imminent refurbishment of the school buildings.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

115 Attainment at the end of both key stages remains below national expectations and progress remains unsatisfactory, as at the time of the last inspection. There has been no improvement.

116 Only one lesson was observed during this inspection. Pupils in year 2 are able to cut out, assemble and join simple components to make a material glove puppet, following guidance from their teacher. The planned design element is very limited in this task, and pupils' understanding of fitness for purpose lacks emphasis. Pupils are unable to describe how they plan to decorate their puppets in order to achieve their chosen style, but enjoy exploring the resources of paints, material and glitter as they build up their puppet's face. There had been no opportunity to plan their finished product and to select the most appropriate resources, which are key skills.

117 There is evidence in teachers' planning of a varied curriculum across the school, but discussions with pupils indicate that the appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding are unsatisfactorily provided for as pupils move through the school. Tasks to develop design skills are often incorporated into history topics, for example making Tudor houses or gas masks. The finished products are a source of pride, but are achieved by use of teachers' templates rather than enabling pupils to work through the processes of designing and making for themselves. Evaluations relate to appearance, not to modifications that might improve the function of their product.

118 Scrutiny of art sketchbooks provides evidence of design work for Diwali and Christmas cards, and some useful exploration of methods that create strong joints. Resources for pupils to use that knowledge practically are inadequate. There are some good resources for food technology.

119 Currently there is little use of ICT in design and technology.

120 A newly appointed co-ordinator has great enthusiasm for improving the provision of this subject in the next few months. The current policy is in need of renewal, and funding for resources, which has been low, is to be increased.

GEOGRAPHY

121 Standards in geography are below the national expectations in both key stages. The quality of learning is satisfactory and pupils make sound progress. Limited writing skills contribute significantly to the below average standards.

122 At Key Stage 1 pupils have a rudimentary awareness of the features around the school. Older pupils are beginning to gain knowledge relating to the countries and main features of the United Kingdom. Competencies associated with the use of maps, such as how roads and buildings can be represented on a plan, are at an elementary stage. Overall, pupils' depth of knowledge in these areas is below that expected of pupils of similar ages.

123 Pupils in Key Stage 2 acquire some understanding of the factors relating to development and to land use. They develop a basic knowledge of their local area, of the United Kingdom and of some other countries. Most pupils can describe some of the differences and similarities between their own area and others chosen area for comparison. The study of the village of Chembokolli in India, for example, provides a stark comparison between their own area and that of a developing country. Pupils have some appreciation of the importance of climate and physical features in determining the development of agriculture, towns and industries but their knowledge is below what might be expected. The study of the water cycle enables pupils to gain satisfactory understanding of the importance of water to the economy and to the natural environment. Skills relating to weather and mapping are extended, as is the understanding of how development can result in both improvement and damage to the environment. In most of these aspects the depth of knowledge and understanding is below that expected for pupils of comparable ages. Information and communication technology is beginning to be used to support the subject, for example, in accessing current weather data. Given that many pupils join the school with limited experiences and with a limited competence in the English language the gains made in each key stage, including those made by pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, are satisfactory.

124 No lessons were observed during the inspection due to the way in which geography is delivered in units. Other evidence suggests that teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. Teachers have positive relationships with their pupils and the range and quality of work shows that they give the subject proper emphasis and that their geographical knowledge is secure.

125 Many pupils enter the school with limited command of the English language, however, and despite the remarkable gains which many pupils make, this does have an adverse effect upon the depth they are able to achieve in their written work.

126 The newly appointed co-ordinator for geography brings much enthusiasm and commitment to his role but has only been in post for a few weeks. What is to be taught to each year group is broadly defined although greater detail is required so that teachers have more exact guidance when planning their programmes. The identification of mapping skills, for example, is not sufficiently specific to indicate more advanced accomplishment. The integrity of the subject is preserved but good cross-curricular links are established through the topic approach that the school has adopted. An example is the topic relating to Greece, which helps to show how the modern country has been influenced by historical factors. Some visits, such as the residential trip to Dol-y-Moch in Wales, enhance the value and the stimulus of the subject.

127 The last Ofsted inspection found that progress at Key Stage 1 was unsatisfactory whilst at Key Stage 2 it was variable. It noted unsatisfactory pupils' attitudes at Key Stage 1. Resources were said to be inadequate and planning lacking in cohesion. Progress is now

satisfactory throughout the school and planning follows a logical thread, developing the long-term programme, There are indications that pupils' attitudes are good. Resources are now satisfactory although a more comprehensive range of maps is needed in order to ensure that mapping skills are developed more thoroughly. Overall, the school's response to the issues raised in the last inspection has been satisfactory.

HISTORY

128 The levels of historical skills and understanding acquired by pupils in each key stage are below those expected. The developing writing skills of many pupils for whom English is not their first language is an important contributory factor. Progress, however, is satisfactory in both Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2.

129 At Key Stage 1 pupils' concept of time is satisfactorily developed through the comparisons between events in the past and the present day and through their own personal 'histories'. Pupils can identify some of the changes which have occurred over time using different sources of historical information such as artefacts, photographs and books. A walk in the immediate locality of the school, for example, established similarities and differences between the style and materials of old and new houses. More pupils than is usual for this age experience some difficulty in understanding the concepts and knowledge covered.

130 At Key Stage 2 the standards attained are below those expected for their age. Most can recall important events related to the topics studied such as the Ancient Greeks, Tudors, the Victorians and life in Britain since 1930. Their concept of chronology is satisfactorily developed. Pupils can describe the important features of the topics studied together with the reasons for some of the major events. In a year 6 lesson, for example, pupils were able to discuss the context and influences surrounding the air attacks on Coventry. They can identify some of the changes which have occurred over time. The ability of many pupils to investigate, interpret and explain the past is somewhat inhibited by the fact that their English language and writing skills are still developing. Satisfactory use is made of information technology to support learning as exemplified in the use of the Internet to research historical data.

131 Despite the lower than expected standards satisfactory progress is made as pupils proceed through each key stage. Those with special educational needs are integrated into the programme with advantage and such pupils, together with those for whom English is an additional language, also make appropriate progress.

132 The quality of teaching in both key stages is satisfactory. Lessons are conducted at a purposeful pace within a productive working atmosphere. Teachers work hard to make the material meaningful. In a practical year 2 lesson related to housing for example, pupils were challenged to think creatively, to offer opinions and to make interpretations. This had the effect of motivating pupils and of enhancing their learning and enjoyment of the subject.

133 Delivery of the curriculum is through a series of topics which properly reflect the programme of the National Curriculum. Published guidance forms a sound basis for teachers to plan their programmes but further definition is required in order to specify more exactly what should be taught and when. Various visits and events such as a 'Victorian Day' and a visit to the Roman remains at Lunt Fort, provide further valuable experiences.

134 The last Ofsted report found standards below expectations and variable progress. Although pupils still attain less than expected standards, this is largely explained by factors attributable to the developing knowledge of English of many pupils. Progress is now

satisfactory and attitudes to the subject good. The school has responded satisfactorily to the issues raised at the time of the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

135 At the time of the last inspection standards in ICT were poor. Pupils did not make satisfactory progress because the curriculum provided for them was poor, teachers lacked the necessary skills to enable pupils to learn well and resources were inadequate. Since the last inspection the school has made very good progress in this area of the curriculum. The new computer suite is very well used during the school day, at lunchtimes and after school. The resulting standards are in line with those expected nationally in the major areas of the curriculum in both key stages. In Key Stage 1 standards are satisfactory in all respects. In Key Stage 2 standards are satisfactory in communicating information and data handling, but there is still work to do in the areas of controlling, measuring and modelling. The progress made by pupils throughout the school is good, made even more significant because the majority of pupils do not have access to computers at home; their experience of computers is almost wholly through school.

136 There is a very well balanced curriculum in ICT for pupils. They have pure ICT sessions where they learn skills associated with the new technology and work towards standards set in the National Curriculum guidelines for ICT. At other times pupils have lessons based on other subjects, but use ICT to enrich their learning experience. In practice it is sometimes hard to differentiate between the two types of lesson as teachers skilfully weave disciplines together. In year 2 pupils use computers to improve their mathematics by practising addition and the place value of numbers. In year 1 pupils merge physical education, literacy and ICT by taking pictures of pupils during a gymnastics session with a digital camera and then using computers to design and write captions for them. In year 6 pupils create a 'talking book'. This is a multi-media presentation using pictures from World War II, sounds such as sirens and anti-aircraft fire and text that is read to the audience in a computer-generated voice. In all these lessons the involvement of the pupils was complete, they were enthralled and captivated whether they worked in collaborating pairs or alone. In other lessons, pupils in year 5 use computers to hone their skills in multiplication facts. In year 6 pupils merge ICT, history and literacy by interrogating a web site based on the diary of Anne Frank. They answer questions and develop their skills in analysis and comprehension in a historical setting.

137 The teaching of ICT is consistently good. Teachers prepare interesting sessions that are relevant to pupils and result in high levels of motivation. They prepare lessons thoroughly and in this they are aided by classroom assistants whose skills and knowledge in using ICT are very good. The contribution of the classroom assistants in the preparation of sessions and then in the teaching of groups, support of EAL pupils and pupils who have special educational needs cannot be overstated. They are both efficient and effective, clear about what to do, when to do it and how to do it. There is evidence of ICT being used across the curriculum in history, mathematics and in science, where pupils draw graphs of pulse rate and heart rate. There is still room for more use of ICT in literacy and this will be even more feasible when the number of computers in classrooms is increased as planned.

MUSIC

138 Attainment is below expectations by the end of Key Stage 2 as it was at the time of the last inspection. Only singing was observed in Key Stage 1, but it is evident from the lack of basic knowledge and skills in years 3 and 4 that standards are low throughout the school. Pupils are not always tuneful singers, and many pupils take no active part during singing

sessions even when steps are taken to limit the effects of inadequate reading skills. While those pupils who do sing are often enthusiastic, and adults set a good example by singing alongside, many will not participate. By year 4 many pupils are still not able to name the percussion instruments they are playing nor reliably identify orchestral instruments playing in Saint-Saëns' *Aquarium and Fossils*. In year 6 some pupils are still struggling to maintain the pulse, and others do not know how to use percussion instruments correctly and for best effect. One pupil, for instance, attempted to play the cymbal flat on the table even though he needed to create a resounding crash for the frightening war music the class was composing. Although pupils do not have the knowledge or experience to discuss how composers achieve a particular mood, they are aware of the effects on the listener and express the type of feelings which are promoted. Year 4 pupils suggest liveliness and joy for the *Aquarium and Fossils* piece and year 3 identify differences in the representation of different creatures in *Carnival of the Animals*. Year 6 pupils have learnt to perform effectively in groups, listening to and watching each other closely as they play. However, pupils in year 4 and year 6 struggle to make any attempt to write down their simple compositions. They are not fully aware of the purpose of doing so, and have limited ideas about how to set about it. By year 6 pupils' technical musical vocabulary is very limited, few pupils can even remember the meaning of crescendo despite its importance in performing their war music. Little use is currently made of ICT in music.

139 The teaching of music is generally satisfactory, but learning is often limited and longer term progress is not satisfactory. During singing sessions there are often shortcomings in the focus of the lesson, with the whole emphasis being on the words to the detriment of pitch, tone and dynamics. In the better lessons attention is drawn to correct posture, although there is no explanation as to why, but in most lessons there is no mention of breath control. Teachers do intervene appropriately and demonstrate correct use of instruments when they see pupils' difficulties, but because the planned work assumes these skills, not all instances are spotted. Similarly, teachers' interventions with groups when they are composing or practising are useful in assisting pupils to improve, but because the work is not building on prior learning the effectiveness is limited. When pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language have a support teacher or assistant they often make better progress than their classmates because of the sustained discussion and the example set by the adult they can emulate. Teachers' general skills in recapitulating information and questioning pupils are usefully employed in ensuring reiteration of basic facts and the context of the work being done, but pupils' retention of these is hindered by how they are introduced to new work and lack of sufficient practice.

140 Although the school is using the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority plans for music lessons it has not taken account of pupils' previously impoverished experience and as a result lesson content is often inappropriate. Moreover, pupils' limited language and literacy skills create further problems for them. While listening to music is a regular part of collective worship opportunities to learn and practise musical skills are few and there is no extra-curricular music. Music has a low profile in the school and makes only a limited contribution to pupils' imaginative and creative development. It is seldom used in the curriculum outside formal weekly music lessons and singing practice.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

141 At the time of the last inspection standards in PE were judged to be in line with national expectations. These standards have been maintained. The progress made by pupils was judged to be satisfactory and this is still the case.

142 Building on the experiences that children have in the reception class, pupils have access to a good range of PE activities in Key Stage 1. Pupils learn how to move in creative

ways in response to music. Early gymnastic skills are developed in years 1 and 2 as pupils learn control in floor-based exercises before moving on to use apparatus such as benches and boxes. Good use is made of the playground where pupils use the painted stimuli to guide their movements. Teachers use the facilities well to shape pupils' response, encouraging a range of turns and movement. The good teaching in Key Stage 1 is exemplified when pupils move on to using a parachute. The whole class work together to move a ball around showing great enthusiasm, team work and occasional awe and wonder as the ball glides over the waves of the parachute as a ball on the ocean.

143 In Key Stage 2 the progress is continued. Gymnastic skills are advanced to include formal rolls and balances and by year 5 pupils are using basic skills to produce sequences involving ten or more components. The teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory, occasionally lacking the precision to move pupils' control and skills to a higher plane. However teachers are very good at getting pupils to evaluate each other's work and to use pupils as exemplars to help others to progress. Pupils in year 5 receive a block period of swimming and the vast majority of pupils exceed the national standard by some distance. Standards in PE generally are given a boost in year 6 when pupils visit a local sports hall complex for the games session. Here pupils receive specialised coaching in a range of activities including basketball, hockey, and athletic events such as the discus and javelin; this represents an exceptional opportunity for primary school age pupils. This particular experience is enriched as the pupils share time at the sports centre with pupils from other schools who have physical disabilities. Groups are mixed and Little Heath pupils experience another facet of an already richly inclusive education.

144 The range of sporting opportunities outside classes is limited. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their football team and the fun and fitness classes in year 3. An extension of these opportunities, possibly using outside coaches, would add valuable quality to the existing provision. In year 6 a residential experience involving a wide range of outdoor, adventurous activities provides a fitting climax to pupils' experience in physical education.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

145 Since the last inspection the school has maintained the satisfactory levels of attainment. Pupils' ability to communicate their thoughts and feelings is limited by weaknesses in literacy, but orally they are able to show they have acquired the basic knowledge and understanding required by the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils at the end of both key stages have sound knowledge of the major faiths and satisfactory understanding of the importance of religion to people in their lives. They experience appropriate opportunities to reflect on spiritual aspects such as prayer and worship and to discuss moral issues such as trust and faithfulness. Lessons were seen in both Key Stage 1 classes and year 6.

146 In year 6 pupils learn about the contribution of Guru Gobind Singh to the Sikh faith and know some of the values held by Sikhs. Pupils explore the importance of trust and give their personal responses to a story about people who give their lives for their faith. Pupils in year 2 learn about the ten Sikh gurus and focus on the most important contributions of Guru Nanak, Guru Har Krishan and Guru Gobind Singh. During the discussion they thoughtfully consider the death of a child of about their own age. Pupils also consider characteristics such as friendliness and kindness in commenting on the work of the gurus. Year 1 pupils look at bread as a source of food through a story and consider the contribution of God and the farmer in producing daily food.

147 In the lessons observed all the teaching was good, and as a result pupils learnt relevant new knowledge and developed their understanding satisfactorily. Teachers all create the right circumstances for exploring ideas about feelings and beliefs, actively

encouraging discussion of different faiths and customs as well as dealing sensitively with troubling or challenging emotions such as loss and courage. As a result, pupils value each other's contributions and feel confident about offering their own experiences and ideas. Because pupils often have difficulty communicating their thoughts, discussion and writing is often not as thoughtful and detailed as their short remarks indicate they could be. Pupils' limited literacy skills in year 6, for instance, mean that their 'trust' poems are largely a repetition of synonyms discovered in the thesaurus rather than original ideas. Teachers provide the relevant technical vocabulary but few pupils use this in their contributions. Many pupils struggle with generalising concepts such as values even though they can cite examples of things that other people do hold dear. During activities pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are often well supported, either by the class teacher or support staff, and as a result explore and express ideas more thoroughly than their peers. Infant classes regularly practise and apply literacy skills in religious education lessons, but this is less frequently so in Key Stage 2.