

INSPECTION REPORT

Pool Hayes Primary School

Walsall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104191

Headteacher: Mrs J K Wordsworth

Reporting inspector: Mr J White
17242

Dates of inspection: 8th - 11th May 2000

Inspection number: 194353

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bridgnorth Grove Willenhall West Midlands
Postcode:	WV12 4RX
Telephone number:	01902 368144
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Steventon
Date of previous inspection:	13 th January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
J White	Registered inspector	Mathematics; Information technology; design and technology; physical education; Equal opportunities; English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
R Barnard	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
D Crow	Team Inspector	English; Art; Music; Under fives	
R Spencer	Team Inspector	Science; Geography; History; Religious education; Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is located in Willenhall, which is part of Walsall. It draws pupils from wide socio-economic backgrounds and attainment is broadly below average on entry to the nursery. Eligibility for free school meals is about average. The school roll has fallen since the last inspection and is expected to continue to fall. There are currently 196 pupils (109 girls, 87 boys) in the main school and 27 part-time pupils in the nursery. Pupils are admitted into the nursery in the term following their third birthday and then into the reception class at the beginning of the year in which they become five. Twelve pupils are of minority ethnic heritage. Sixty pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs including two with statements; this figure is above the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Standards are mainly satisfactory and improving most significantly in English and mathematics. Much of the teaching is good. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall with good features. Pupils' personal development is promoted strongly. The governors support the school well. Pupils have positive attitudes, are keen to learn and they behave very well. The headteacher and staff provide a high level of care. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' progress is good in most subjects.
- Pupils' positive attitudes and very good behaviour contribute strongly to their achievements.
- Pupils are very well cared for.
- The headteacher and staff promote pupils' personal development very well.
- Governors are well informed and supportive.

What could be improved

Standards in science are below average.
The most able pupils' progress in writing should be better in Years 2-4
Reports to parents do not give enough information on pupils' progress
Leadership of curricular organisation and planning is not strong enough.

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 January 1997. It has made satisfactory improvement since then. Standards have fluctuated over time but are improving especially in English and mathematics and the school is on course to meet its targets in these subjects. The last inspection found that the discretionary curriculum time was not well used. This has been rectified and the time is now allocated to the main core subjects. The school's library was re-sited to enable it to be used more often. There is little evidence of any significant increase in opportunities for pupils' personal research and practical and investigative work is under-emphasised. The last inspection judged that the withdrawal of pupils from their classes to receive extra support was not monitored well enough. This situation has improved. The effectiveness of budgetary decisions was not monitored well at the time of the last inspection. Monitoring is now very thorough and governors are well informed.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	C	E	E	E
mathematics	E	E	D	E
science	E	E	E	E*

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

These results indicate that standards in the national tests have been well below average overall. The school's average score in science, when compared with similar schools, placed it in the lowest 5 per cent. However, there has been fairly high pupil mobility in the Year 6 cohorts and pupils have also experienced considerable turnover in the teaching staff. Also, the number of pupils with special educational needs has steadily risen. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly below average. Given all these circumstances the inspection finds that overall progress is good and standards are mainly similar to those found in the last inspection. Standards in the current Year 6 are broadly average in almost all subjects. However, standards in science are below average at ages seven and eleven. In the 1999 national tests for pupils aged seven standards were average in mathematics and writing and below average in reading. The current pupils in Year 2 achieve average standards in all subjects except science. The youngest pupils in the reception class make good progress towards achieving the outcomes expected of pupils aged five.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well.
Personal development and relationships	Very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory but improving.

Pupils are keen and enthusiastic. They respond eagerly to taking initiative and show considerable respect for others' feelings and beliefs. Junior pupils look after the youngest infant and nursery pupils very well.

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.

Ninety eight per cent of the teaching is satisfactory or better. Much of the teaching is good. No very good teaching was observed. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good overall. Literacy and numeracy are taught well. Most lessons are well structured and pupils are managed well. Teachers make good use of questions. Generally, pupils' range of abilities is catered for at least satisfactorily but often not in science. Teachers often do not make enough use of practical and investigative work. Teaching in the reception is consistently good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The range of learning opportunities is satisfactory overall.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Social development is fostered well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	A high level of care is provided.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Good behaviour and pupils' personal development are promoted very strongly. Pupils with special educational needs make particularly good progress in basic skills.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil them well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good.
The strategic use of resources	Good.

The school is adequately staffed. Classroom assistants perform their duties very well especially when supporting pupils with special educational needs. All staff cope well with accommodation that has several disadvantages. The provision of resources is improving but there are significant gaps. The headteacher and governors promote pupils' personal development strongly. Leadership of curricular planning and organisation is not strong enough. The governors are well informed, give good support and ensure the best value is gained from expenditure.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and they are making good progress. • Behaviour is good. • The teaching is good. • Children are expected to work hard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework. • Information on how their children are getting on. • Leadership and management. • The school should work more closely with parents. • The range of extra-curricular activities.

The inspection's findings support what pleases parents most. Homework is provided largely at the discretion of individual teachers, but there is no coherent system to enable parents to help with their children's reading. Pupils' annual reports do not give enough information on their achievements in all subjects. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school welcomes the support of parents and keeps them informed of major curriculum developments. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the 1999 national tests the school's average scores for pupils aged eleven were well below the average for all schools in English and science and below average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools the scores were well below average in English and mathematics and very low in science. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level 4 or better was well below average in all three subjects. Despite these unsatisfactory results, the school's trend in improvement is broadly in line with the national trend. The best improvement has been in mathematics. Pupil mobility in the Year 6 cohorts, an unsettled period in staffing and a steady increase in the above average number of pupils with special educational needs have all contributed to the unsatisfactory standards. Boys have performed better than girls in all three subjects. The average scores in the 1999 tests for pupils aged seven were below the average for all schools in reading and average in writing and mathematics. When compared with similar schools the results were well below average in reading, average in writing and below average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level 2 or better was below average in reading and mathematics and broadly average in writing. Girls performed better than boys. According to teachers' assessments in science, the number of pupils reaching the expected level 2 or better was well below average. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies, more settled staffing arrangements and extra support for pupils' learning have all helped to improve standards in English and mathematics in the infants and juniors. The current pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 achieve average overall standards in these subjects and they are similar to those found in the last inspection. Developments in science have been slower and standards are below average. At the time of the last inspection they were average. The differences in attainment between boys and girls in the three subjects are not as significant as in the national tests. The school is on course to meet its targets in English and mathematics.
2. Attainment on entry to the nursery is broadly below average. Progress is satisfactory in the nursery and good in the reception class. Most of the children under five should attain many of the desirable outcomes for learning expected of pupils when they reach compulsory school age. Some of the high attaining pupils will be working at level 1 of the National Curriculum. Pupils aged five attain average standards in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative and physical development.
3. Infant pupils make good progress in speaking, listening and reading. Overall progress in writing is satisfactory. Pupils listen carefully in literacy lessons when they are discussing fiction and non-fiction books. By Year 2 many pupils speak clearly and confidently. Pupils develop good strategies for reading unfamiliar words and in Year 2 they read confidently and accurately. High attaining pupils predict what might happen next in a story and read with expression. Writing progresses well in the early stages of the infants but by Year 2 has slowed down. Most Year 2 pupils write in simple sentences and use spelling and basic punctuation reasonably accurately but high attainers should be achieving better. The overuse of worksheets that require only minimal responses is restricting their progress. They also have too few opportunities to write in other subjects. Junior pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. They are usually attentive and talk confidently, for example when discussing the styles of authors and giving their opinions of characters. By Year 6 pupils make thoughtful responses and justify their preferences for authors. Progress in reading is good in the use of fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils who were heard reading in Year 6

generally read fluently and accurately. They have developed competent library skills. Progress in writing is good by Year 6 but in Year 3 and Year 4 it is satisfactory. Many pupils in these latter year groups are not joining their letters and do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing in other subjects. Year 6 pupils spell fairly accurately and use grammar and punctuation satisfactorily. Their handwriting is joined and legible and they write in a range of different forms.

4. Infant pupils make good overall progress in mathematics especially in their knowledge and understanding of number and shape. They are also making good progress in their use of mathematical terminology. Progress is more uneven in Year 2 than in Year 1. Regular mental work is helping Year 2 pupils to improve their speed of mental calculations but their recall of basic number facts remains fairly slow. They are growing in confidence in solving simple addition and subtraction problems and name common shapes accurately. High attaining pupils name three-dimensional shapes and understand simple fractions. Progress in the juniors is satisfactory in Year 3 and Year 4 but accelerates quickly in Year 5 and Year 6. This good rate of progress has been helped considerably by the use of booster classes during the school day. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 are improving their mental recall of number facts but their insecure knowledge impedes their rate of progress. Year 6 pupils are developing competent knowledge and understanding of numbers, the number system and shape. Several high attaining pupils achieve above average standards, for example in their use of decimals. Data handling is satisfactory throughout the school. Generally, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use mathematics in other subjects.
5. Progress in science is very uneven across the school. It is good in the early years of the infants but is slower in Years 2-4. It improves in Year 5 and Year 6 but there are too many gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding to make up for lost ground. Science has received less attention than English and mathematics and this has inevitably affected standards. There is not enough experimental and investigative work and the over-use of worksheets has restricted pupils' opportunities for practical work. Often not enough account is taken of what pupils already know and understand.
6. Standards in religious education and information and communications technology are average by the ages of seven and eleven. Pupils are developing satisfactory knowledge of Christianity and other major religions and beliefs. In some classes the lack of opportunity for pupils to write at length and in their own words is holding back their progress. Progress in information and control technology is good. Pupils become more independent users of hardware and software as they become older and are developing competent skills in communication and control. In the last inspection standards were average in religious education and good in information technology.
7. Standards in art, geography, history, music and physical education are broadly average overall. In comparison with the last inspection, standards are similar in art, geography and history, better in physical education and less good in music. However, it is important to stress that in the current inspection the total number of lessons observed in these subjects was small. A strength in geography is the upper junior pupils' understanding of contrasting localities. In music, many high attaining pupils achieve above average standards. A weakness in geography and history is the lack of opportunity in some classes for pupils to write at length. In physical education pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 are developing good ball skills. There was insufficient evidence to evaluate standards in design and technology.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make good overall progress but especially in basic literacy and mathematical skills. The skilled support of classroom assistants is a significant factor in pupils' progress. High attaining pupils generally benefit from the arrangements for

grouping pupils for work in English and mathematics especially the booster classes. The very few gifted pupils currently attend, or will shortly attend, mathematics lessons at the local comprehensive school. Those in Year 5 will also be attending the children's university.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' high standards of attitudes, values and personal development have a positive impact on their achievements and have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school, are keen to learn and respond well in lessons. Pupils under five behave well and are developing good early work habits. They are keen and enthusiastic. Pupils throughout the school listen well to instructions, concentrate well and show respect for each others' work. Pupils regularly encourage each other. For example, in an art lesson a pupil commented on a friend's work 'that's a nice, colourful picture'. Pupils usually sustain their concentration throughout lessons but occasionally it inevitably lapses during those that are too long. They show good interest in their work and involve themselves busily in activities. In a science lesson in a mixed Year 3 and Year 4 class, even at the end of a long, warm afternoon, all the pupils watched and listened very eagerly to a video about plants.
10. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, assemblies, around the school and especially in the playground and at lunch times is very good. No incidents of aggressive behaviour or bullying were observed during the inspection. There has been only one temporary exclusion during the last year, a figure well below the national average. All pupils know the school rules well and are aware of how to behave appropriately. They have very good manners, are polite, and show very good respect for others' feelings. They are very helpful and courteous. Relationships throughout the school are good. Junior and infant pupils play together well.
11. Pupils work together well in pairs and groups often with a positive impact on their learning. In a religious education lesson in a Year 1/Year 2 class pupils very sensibly discussed in pairs why birthdays are special. In physical education lessons pupils co-operate well with each other and evaluate their own and others' performance. Pupils always show appreciation when their classmates try hard and they support their contributions.
12. Pupils' personal development is very good. They undertake a wide range of tasks in an increasingly mature and responsible manner. Infant pupils return registers to the office, help tidy up resources and hold doors open for others. Year 6 pupils are very responsible in a range of duties including playing with and supervising the youngest pupils in the playground, helping the toddler group set out resources, and acting as lunchtime monitors. This latter duty helps to ensure a very orderly lunchtime for pupils in very difficult accommodation.
13. Attendance levels are satisfactory and are in line with the national average. They show a marked improvement for the current academic year compared with the previous year when the overall rate was below the national average. Levels are consistent between classes. Rates of unauthorised absences are low. A number of pupils take holidays in term time and a few are persistently late. Lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Ninety eight per cent of the teaching is satisfactory or better and in six out of ten lessons it is good. Unsatisfactory teaching is uncommon. The teaching of children under five is good overall and the teaching in the reception class is consistently effective. The nursery nurse in the nursery and the reception teacher give good emphasis to the key learning areas of pupils'

personal and social development, language and literacy, and mathematics. A good range of practical activities is provided and good use is made of assessment to help plan children's work. Children are given plenty of praise but also expected to work hard.

15. The literacy and numeracy strategies are generally taught well and setting arrangements are helping teachers to meet the range of pupils' prior attainment. In the booster classes in Year 5 and Year 6 the addition of an extra teacher has contributed towards raising standards. The whole-class work at the beginning of literacy and numeracy hours is managed effectively. Pupils are benefiting from the direct teaching of skills and teachers make good use of questions to add pace to the learning. For example, in a good numeracy lesson in Year 1 the teacher's question "how can you tell which number is the greater?" helped pupils to compare numbers and use "less than" or "greater than". Teachers' explanations are generally clear. In a good literacy lesson in Year 5, pupils at the start of the lesson could not define "preposition" but after the teacher's explanation they went on to identify them in a piece of text. A weakness in the teaching in English is the lack of opportunities provided for high attaining pupils in Year 2 to write independently at sufficient length. This slows down their progress. In Year 3 and Year 4 high attainers' progress in writing is hampered by not enough opportunities being given for them to write in subjects other than English. In mathematics the pace of teaching of mental arithmetic is often brisk and good use is made of plenaries to reinforce key skills. However, in about a third of lessons the pace of learning slows during the main activities.
16. Most lessons are well structured, pupils are managed well and positive relationships are developed. Pupils' very good behaviour and keen attitudes to work contribute strongly to the quality of learning. They sustain their concentration and interest for lengthy periods. In some subjects, most notably science, lessons are often too long and inevitably pupils' concentration is reduced as the lesson progresses. A weakness in the teaching in science is the lack of development of pupils' practical and investigative skills resulting in slow progress in these important skills.
17. There are good examples in the marking of pupils' work in which suggestions on how pupils might improve are made. However, this is not a consistent feature of the teaching and the inspection's scrutiny of pupils' work found some perfunctory and inaccurate marking. A general weakness is the absence of informative marking of pupils' writing in other subjects apart from English. In several lessons in Year 3 and Year 4 not enough rigorous account was taken of what pupils already knew and understood and consequently progress was rarely better than satisfactory.
18. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. They receive especially effective support from well-trained classroom assistants who teach basic skills thoroughly. Pupils are benefiting from the highly structured Teaching Handwriting Reading and Spelling Programme (THRASS). In the effective lessons seen the assistants' high expectations and plenty of praise kept pupils on their toes and helped them to make speedy progress in their spelling and knowledge of letter sounds. Very good relationships are also contributing to pupils' progress.

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

19. The curriculum is broad and balanced and complies with all statutory requirements. It includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, which is linked to the locally agreed syllabus. The curriculum for children under five is good and gives

suitable emphasis to children's personal and social development, language and literacy, and mathematics. The under-fives' work is already planned according to the goals for learning which take effect from September of the current year.

20. A useful whole-school curriculum framework for the infant and junior years comprises rolling programmes covering two-year cycles for the mixed-age classes. Policies are satisfactory for all subjects and for cross-curricular themes, such as sex, drugs and health education. The frameworks for literacy and numeracy determine much of the content of work in English and mathematics and appropriate interim schemes of work guide planning in many of the other subjects including science, history, geography and art. The teachers have made significant efforts to align the existing schemes of work with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidelines but there remain weaknesses which result in insufficient emphasis being given to some aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study in science, geography and history. Although every effort is made to ensure that the two-year rolling programme secures pupils' progressive learning, the outcomes are not always fully successful because of inconsistencies in the depth and breadth of individual subject schemes and the planning between years. Medium-term plans are detailed and support the teaching but they lack consistency in format and approach. The deputy headteacher intends to carry out a whole-school curriculum review in order to align the curriculum with the proposed National Curriculum changes for autumn 2000. The previous inspection identified that the use of non-statutory time was not well planned. The school has addressed this issue by allocating the time to the main core subjects. However, the allocation of lengthy blocks of time for several subjects but especially science, presents an unnecessary challenge to teachers to sustain pupils' interest.
21. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are being implemented successfully and are making a considerable contribution to improving standards. They are also having a positive impact on the structure of lessons in other subjects. However, the application of literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects is not yet defined clearly and explicitly enough. The extensive use of printed worksheets requiring only limited written responses, particularly in infant classes, is restricting the opportunities for pupils to develop and extend their writing skills. The overuse of worksheets was an issue identified in the previous report and it remains a concern. Significant resourcefulness is shown in arranging pupils in a variety of groups for English and mathematics. This ensures that work is matched to their abilities and interests. Well planned extra support through 'booster classes', 'writers' workshops', 'phonic programmes' and the THRASS programme aids pupils' learning very well, especially those with special educational needs. The school monitors the progress of pupils who are withdrawn for a range of activities and appropriate work is set as homework when pupils have missed out important sessions.
22. All pupils have equal access and opportunity in curricular and extra-curricular activities. A range of opportunities is provided for pupils to participate in additional activities that enrich the curriculum. These include football, choir, art, netball and dance. Many field trips and residential trips are also arranged, providing a good extension to the curriculum. Visits to Parliament, the Churchill Rooms and local museums enhance historical knowledge and understanding. Geographical skills are well promoted by visiting Walsall Bescot Stadium and a residential visit to Llangollen as a study of a contrasting locality.
23. Provision for special educational needs is good and pupils make good progress. Well-qualified classroom assistants contribute significantly to the pupils' learning. Statutory requirements with regard to statements are being met. Generally, the class teachers ensure work is well matched to the pupils' prior attainment. However, the individual education

plans for many of the pupils are identical and therefore not sufficiently targeted towards meeting their individual needs.

24. The provision for personal, social and health education is good and enhances the curriculum. Pupils receive effective education on health, sex and drugs. Qualified nurses, male and female, explain the impact of puberty to Year 6 boys and girls. A specialist local drama group further supports the school's work on drug education. Health education is promoted primarily through the science curriculum. The school's ethos promotes personal and social education very effectively. The headteacher provides a citizenship activity and has introduced a Citizenship Award, which is given to one pupil each year for making the most effective contribution, as judged by the whole school community. Pupils are made aware of various aspects of citizenship, relationships and their roles and responsibilities. This is well illustrated by the way Year 6 pupils take responsibility for the expensive information and communications technological equipment. They show a mature sense of responsibility by staying on after school hours to ensure everything is put away. There are many examples of pupils working collaboratively. Year 6 pupils have a named nursery pupil to escort to the assembly and generally look after their protégé's interest and welfare. The staff lead by example setting a good standard to which the pupils aspire. Personal and social education has a positive effect on many aspects of school life and successfully develops pupils' self-confidence and esteem.
25. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is satisfactory overall. Spiritual development is provided mainly in religious education lessons and assemblies. There are opportunities in assemblies for pupils to reflect upon the matters that have been discussed but there are also opportunities that are not exploited, during these occasions and in lessons, to enable pupils to engage in meaningful reflection. There is insufficient evidence to indicate whether work in music, poetry and art contributes significantly to the development of pupils' creativity and spiritual development. Visitors from different local church groups are invited to assemblies and, although they make useful contributions, links are not made to subjects being studied and no specific themes are identified.
26. Moral development is promoted satisfactorily. Pupils are sufficiently encouraged to develop a clear understanding of the differences between right and wrong. They are expected to be considerate and respectful towards one another. Social development is fostered strongly. This is well demonstrated in the way pupils are encouraged to listen to each other, take turns and support those who have a physical disability. For example, in art and science lessons the work surfaces are limited in size and pupils have to support each other and clear away with the minimum of fuss. Harmonious lunchtimes are good examples of the effects of pupils being encouraged to demonstrate their good sense of responsibility.
27. Much of the stimulus for cultural development comes through religion, art, music and literature. Pupils enjoy learning about the major world religions. This was well illustrated in a Year 4 lesson on Sikhism when pupils watched a video programme which introduced them to some demanding concepts and challenging values. Pupils watched this lengthy programme quietly and attentively on a very hot day. Visits to local places of interest, such as Bloxwich Art centre, Birmingham Repertory and visitors to the school enhance pupils' cultural understanding.
28. The curriculum is extended by effective links with the local comprehensive school and with the local community, and these have a beneficial impact on pupils' learning. The comprehensive school provides material resources and supports the school with staff expertise, for example the very high attainers in mathematics join secondary classes to extend their learning. Also, the comprehensive school's facilities for information and control

technology, and its swimming pool, are also used. The primary and secondary schools jointly plan a science topic on 'mini-beasts' as a shared project for Year 3 and Year 4 for the summer term. The school has very good links with the local church and is well supported by the Walsall Football Club.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29. Pupils are very well cared for in a very supportive environment for learning that enables them to feel valued and comfortable. Care is taken by teaching and non-teaching staff to ensure pupils' health, safety and well-being. A comprehensive policy for health and safety guides practice. All members of staff, including recent appointments, have been trained in first aid. The school is secure, clean and tidy. There are well established routines to care for pupils with medical conditions or who are sick. Staff know the pupils and their backgrounds well and provide strong personal support. The arrangements for child protection are very good and all members of staff are regularly made aware of all relevant issues.
30. Measures to promote good behaviour are thorough and the very good behaviour and discipline policy is implemented consistently. The strong emphasis on use of praise, developing self-esteem, and encouraging pupils to be responsible for their own behaviour, has a very positive impact on standards. Any incidents of aggressive or oppressive behaviour are usually dealt with effectively. The records kept to monitor pupils' behaviour are of an exceptionally high standard and ensure the headteacher has her finger on the pulse. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good and have helped to improve overall levels in the current academic year.
31. Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are thorough and currently under review in order to make them more manageable. Children under five are assessed on entry to the nursery and again in the reception class. Good use is made of the assessments in planning children's work. The headteacher undertakes detailed analysis of pupils' performance in national tests and the information has been used to good effect for grouping pupils for literacy and numeracy lessons. There is further scope for the analysis to guide teaching and curricular planning more consistently. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and placed on the special needs register if required. The individual education plans for pupils at stage 2 of the Code of Practice are not sufficiently individual and there is insufficient recording of the pupils' progress towards meeting their targets. Class assistants provide effective support for pupils with special needs and are well trained for the work they do. Requirements for pupils with statements are met appropriately.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

32. Partnership with parents is satisfactory. In some respects the partnership has a positive impact on pupils' achievements but there are also weaknesses. Most parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and/or completed the parents' questionnaire believe their children are making good progress and like coming to school. They also consider teaching to be good and that pupils behave well. However, a significant minority would like more information on how well their children are getting on (an issue raised in the previous report) and feel the school does not work closely with them. They also have some concerns about leadership and management and would like a wider range of activities outside lessons. The inspection's findings support parents' concerns with regard to information they receive on their children's progress. Pupils' annual reports are generally unsatisfactory. They do not consistently provide clear evaluation of pupils' progress in all subjects or suggest clear targets to help

pupils improve. They also fail to always report separately on all subjects. The school acknowledges that reports need to be improved. The lack of home/school reading diaries does not encourage parents to become involved in helping their children's reading at home. Many parents feel they were not consulted about staff redundancies that occurred two years ago. However, this issue was largely beyond the school's control. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.

33. The information parents receive from the school varies in quality but is satisfactory overall. Newsletters are helpful and informative and include details of projects to be undertaken. The range of events to inform parents of the school's work is good and includes meetings on literacy and numeracy and open days for parents to visit classrooms. The home/school agreement is a well-prepared document and has received the support of most parents. The school prospectus and the Governors' Annual Report are well presented and give parents helpful information on the work of the school. Parents are encouraged to raise problems or issues and staff are readily available to deal with them especially at the start and end of the school day.
34. Parents provide good help in classrooms and in extra-curricular activities. Their help is encouraged well by the school and has a positive impact on standards, for example in information and communications technology. Parents provide good financial support to the school especially in relation to fund raising. Most parents feel their children get the right amount of work to do at home but several parents commented that the arrangements were more ad hoc than planned.
35. Partnership with parents of children aged under five is satisfactory. There are daily opportunities for parents to speak informally with staff at the beginning and end of sessions. Parents are made very welcome and opportunities are given for them to come in and help with activities. Parent and volunteer helpers are provided with clear instructions and they make a very good contribution towards pupils' work. The sound partnership with parents contributes to children's progress towards the desirable outcomes for learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

36. Since the headteacher's appointment two years ago the school has experienced major changes in staffing including staff redundancies. Five of the seven teachers have joined the staff during this period. Two are newly qualified, one is the deputy headteacher and another is on a fixed term contract and leaves at the end of the current term. The school's organisation for classes has also changed from single ages to mixed ages. Additionally, the headteacher undertook an unavoidable prolonged period of absence because of illness. The governors have supported the school well during this difficult period and the signs are that the more settled staffing arrangements are beginning to benefit the pupils' learning. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory but the school is beginning to develop at a faster rate.
37. The headteacher and governors are committed to improving overall standards especially in the main core subjects. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been adopted enthusiastically and several initiatives, including booster classes during the school day, are contributing to an improvement in standards in English and mathematics. Science has received less attention and consequently standards have not improved as much. The headteacher has spearheaded developments in information and communications technology and it is used well in the school's general administration.

38. The school development plan is a useful instrument for guiding the school's planning. It evaluates the school's strengths and weaknesses, identifies clear targets and indicates how they will be tackled. It also importantly includes likely financial costs. A good feature of the plan is the inclusion of arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the school's work. Appropriately, the plan has given priority to raising standards in literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology but curiously does not include any specific targets for science. Staff and governors are well involved in the process of planning.
39. The headteacher delegates a number of leadership and management responsibilities to the members of the senior management team and to subject co-ordinators. The deputy headteacher carries a heavy load that includes oversight of the curriculum and leadership of English, history and geography. He is also the leader of Key Stage 2. The early years co-ordinator's responsibilities also include leadership of Key Stage 1, music, child protection and family learning. All subject leaders are expected to take the lead in developing policies and at some stage primarily to be responsible for monitoring teaching and learning in their subjects. Although the headteachers' delegation enables staff to develop their leadership roles care must be taken to ensure that they are not overloaded. The staff work hard and the headteacher's role in guiding and supporting them needs to be more prominent. Some feel they are left too much to their own devices.
40. Monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning are at an early stage. The implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies has been monitored by subject co-ordinators with the headteacher's help in mathematics. This has provided useful information about particular classes but is only a partial picture of strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning across the whole school. The headteacher has monitored the two newly qualified teachers and they are well supported by their colleagues. In the plans for further monitoring and evaluating of the school's work the headteacher's role in observing teaching is not strong enough. Inconsistencies in the quality of curricular planning indicate that monitoring of planning has not been rigorous enough. The headteachers' monitoring of pupils' progress in English and mathematics is thorough and has contributed to the raising of standards.
41. The governors are well informed about the school's work. They have good knowledge of standards and their targets for the headteacher include the raising of pupils' performance in Key Stage 2 tests by five per cent. The governors have also set appropriate targets for the deputy head to implement and develop the new curriculum from September of the current year and to further develop links with parents. The governors with responsibility for literacy and numeracy are developing good links with the subject co-ordinators and have observed lessons. A potentially very worthwhile initiative is the recent inclusion of a governor in the senior management team's meetings. Governors are actively involved in the appointment of staff. Their decision to commit expenditure to providing an above average number of classroom assistants has been especially cost effective. The assistants provide effective support especially to pupils with special educational needs. The governors' and headteacher's control and administration of the school's budget are efficient. Since 1998 the budget has needed to be managed carefully and now is healthier. A key issue in the last inspection was the need to introduce systematic procedures to monitor the effectiveness of spending. A good policy now guides practice. The finance committee monitors spending thoroughly and ensures it is in line with the development plan's priorities. Governors are well aware of the need to secure the best value from spending and seek to make savings where possible, for example grounds maintenance costs have been cut considerably. The governors meet their statutory responsibilities.
42. Provision for special educational needs is good. The very good support of classroom assistants contributes significantly to pupils' good progress in learning basic skills. Overall

management of special educational needs is satisfactory but there are weaknesses that need addressing. Many of the pupils' individual education plans are insufficiently targeted towards meeting their distinctive individual needs. There is no easily accessible central record of pupils' progress towards meeting their targets, and no record is kept of consultation with parents of pupils at stages 1 and 2 of the Code of Practice.

43. Specific grant funding is managed efficiently to support the priorities in the development plan including staff training. The headteacher meets with staff to discuss their professional needs and staff development is an integral part of the school development plan. Where appropriate, staff provide in-service training for their colleagues, for example in mathematics. The school plans to implement a programme of staff development in line with national proposals for performance management.
44. Generally, the teachers are appropriately qualified and /or experienced to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. Classroom assistants are well qualified. The staff and pupils cope well with open plan accommodation that has several disadvantages. Classrooms are of unequal size and some teaching areas are small. Noise from adjacent classrooms and the kitchen is often intrusive. The library is small and used frequently as a teaching area. Given these limitations, the good concentration of pupils is a credit to them. Storage space is limited. The school is not well resourced overall and there are significant gaps in resources for geography and history. There are not enough 'reading' books to enable junior pupils to take them home to support their work in literacy. The school is aware of these deficiencies and is seeking to improve them.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

45. The headteacher and governors should:
- (1) Raise standards in science by:
 - providing regular opportunities for pupils to undertake experimental and investigative work:
 - making better use of assessment when planning pupils' work. Paragraphs: 1, 5, 16, 20, 37-38, 70-78.
 - (2) Improve progress in writing in Years 2-4 by ensuring the most able pupils have more opportunities to write independently and at greater length, in English and other subjects. Paragraphs: 1, 3, 5, 16, 21, 58-59, 76, 89, 107.
 - (3) Improve pupils' annual reports by giving more detail on strengths and weaknesses in pupils' achievements in all subjects, and by suggesting how pupils might improve. Paragraph: 32.
 - (4) Monitor and evaluate curricular planning and organisation more thoroughly to ensure that planning is consistently effective and lessons are not too long. Paragraphs: 9, 16, 20, 39, 40.

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL FOR INCLUSION IN THE ACTION PLAN

- Improve the use of mathematics in other subjects. Paragraphs: 4, 21, 66, 68.
- Ensure pupils' writing is marked in other subjects apart from English. Paragraphs: 17, 76, 89, 108.

- Make more consistent use of assessment when planning pupils' work. Paragraphs: 17, 31, 73, 108.
- Improve individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs. Paragraphs: 23, 31, 42.
- Improve the records of progress of pupils with special educational needs. Paragraphs: 31, 42.
- Keep notes of all meetings with parents of pupils' with special educational needs. Paragraph: 42.
- Give parents more opportunities to help with their children's reading. Paragraphs: 32, 62.
- Give the headteacher a more active role in plans for monitoring teaching and learning. Paragraph: 40.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	60	38	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	14	196
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	28

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	1	60

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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
	1999	9	27	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	7
	Girls	23	25	24
	Total	29	31	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (84)	86 (92)	86 (92)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	7	6
	Girls	25	25	23
	Total	31	32	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (84)	89 (92)	81 (99)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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
	1999	17	17	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	11	10
	Girls	9	8	9
	Total	17	19	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (47)	56 (50)	56 (41)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	12	13
	Girls	8	10	10
	Total	17	22	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (56)	65 (56)	68 (56)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	-
Black – other	-
Indian	11
Pakistani	-
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	-
White	158
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	76

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	-
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	37

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	-	-
Black – African heritage	-	-
Black – other	1	-
Indian	-	-
Pakistani	-	-
Bangladeshi	-	-
Chinese	-	-
White	-	-
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.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
	£
Total income	358,272
Total expenditure	335,566
Expenditure per pupil	1,505
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,994
Balance carried forward to next year	27,700

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	223
Number of questionnaires returned	75

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	36	5	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	48	5	3	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	48	4	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	41	24	5	9
The teaching is good.	31	57	8	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	32	33	9	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	36	11	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	44	0	3	4
The school works closely with parents.	23	36	27	13	1
The school is well led and managed.	21	31	24	15	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	25	63	5	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	25	24	17	17

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

46. Children are admitted to the nursery, on a part time basis, at the start of the academic year in which they attain their fourth birthday and sometimes earlier if there is a space. They enter the reception class in the September of the academic year in which they turn five. At the time of the inspection, there were 28 children in the nursery and ten children were below compulsory school age in the reception class. A qualified nursery nurse is responsible for teaching children in the nursery.
47. The attainment of most children on entry to the nursery is below average. This is confirmed by assessments undertaken on entry to school. They make satisfactory progress in the nursery and good progress in the reception class and by the age of five, most should achieve the desirable learning outcomes in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative and physical development. A few of the high attaining children will be working towards level one of the National Curriculum in English and mathematics. The progress of children with special educational needs is good. Children aged five attain average standards overall. Overall progress is better than at the time of the last inspection.

Personal and social development

48. The majority of children achieve the desirable learning outcomes for this area of learning by the time they are of compulsory school age. The personal and social development of children is given a high priority by all staff and the children make good progress in developing personal and social skills. Children are encouraged to be as independent as possible. For example, in the nursery they take responsibility for handing out fruit at milk-time and in both the nursery and reception class they are appropriately encouraged to tidy up after activities. Children's confidence and self-respect develop well and staff help children to develop a clear sense of what is right and what is wrong. In the nursery and the reception class, they successfully make choices from the range of activities on offer and they usually share and play well together. Children know how to take turns when sharing resources such as the computer and they handle books and equipment with care and respect. They show interest and generally concentrate well when working in a group with an adult or when working at a task independently. They have satisfactory opportunities to learn about their own culture and develop a sound awareness of other cultures and sensitivity towards those with different beliefs. They participate in Christian festivals and learn about other religious festivals such as Divali. Children show a range of feelings, for example, joy and excitement at using their voices to make high and low sounds in a music session. Staff planning shows that appropriate opportunities are provided for them to learn how to treat living things with care and respect. Relationships between the staff and the children are good and the children respond well to the high standards set for them.

Language and literacy

49. Most children will attain the desirable learning outcomes for language and literacy by the time they enter Key Stage 1, the term after they are five. High attaining children will be working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum in English. Staff in both the nursery and reception class work hard to promote early language and listening skills. They encourage children to use the correct language and to extend their vocabulary. For example, in the nursery when talking about their recent nature walk, children learnt the names of dandelions,

buttercups and daisies and in the reception class in circle time children learn to express their thoughts and feelings in words. In the nursery, children participate well in role-play in the 'shop' and in the reception class they are given further opportunities to develop role-play such as in the 'Animal Hospital'. Virtually all the children enjoy stories and handle books correctly. Most of the children in the nursery can recognise their name and the making of a class book related to their nature walk is appropriately developing their understanding that words and pictures carry meaning. In the reception class, whole class reading of big books and the sharing of texts, such as 'The Swan Story' by Sebastian Swan help children to understand and use correctly terms such as 'title', 'front cover' and 'author'. Some children can recognise a number of familiar words and a few higher attaining children can read a simple repetitive book. The majority of children in the nursery hold their pencil correctly and some make reasonable attempts at writing their own name with appropriate use of upper and lower case letters. Some children copy over the teacher's writing and a few children make satisfactory attempts at copying underneath. High attaining children in the reception class make good attempts, with help, at writing a simple sentence. Very good opportunities are provided for children to 'write' for themselves. For example, a high attaining child in the reception class made a book related to characters from 'Thomas the Tank Engine' books. He was able to write sentences such as 'Percy was pulling the trucks' completely unaided, using correct spelling and with appropriate use of capital letters and full stops. Lots of the children know the sounds of some of the letters and high attaining children know many and sound out and spell simple three letter words, such as 'jet', correctly. Children are taught a good range of action songs and rhymes and this helps them to associate sounds with patterns in rhymes and words in letters. In the reception class, during the literacy hour, children enjoy learning to differentiate the ending sound of words by using 'Sam, the alien' who mispronounces words.

Mathematics

50. Most children will attain the desirable outcomes for learning in this area by the time they are of compulsory school age. High attaining children will be working towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum. Many, incidental opportunities are used well by staff to encourage children to develop counting skills and learn about simple mathematical ideas. For example, at snack-time in the nursery, children count and match the pieces of fruit to the number of children present and discuss cutting fruit into halves. They are familiar with a good range of number songs and rhymes. Most children can count to five. However, there are insufficient resources and opportunities in the nursery for children to develop counting and number operations by using games and to solve problems through practical activities. In the reception class many children can count to ten and match the correct number to a group of objects. High attaining children can count to twenty and are developing a clear understanding of mathematical terms such as 'more' and 'less', 'taller' and 'shorter'. In the nursery, children are able to complete simple jigsaws and match appropriate sizes and shapes into the correct places. Most children know the names of simple two-dimensional shapes, such as circles, triangles and squares and they are developing an early understanding of capacity through water play activities. Regular opportunities are provided by staff for children to sort, match and order objects and to make patterns. Through role-play in the shop, children are developing an awareness of money coins and the need for money.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

51. The majority of children will achieve the desirable learning outcomes by the time they enter Key Stage 1. Staff plan a good variety of well thought-out topics, such as 'Ourselves', 'Transport' and 'Plants and Animals', to effectively develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Work in this area is also enhanced by visits such as to a farm or

walks in the school grounds and local area. In the nursery, children visited the local sweet shop and made a simple map of their journey there and back. Many opportunities are provided for children to talk about their families and they learn about the past by, for example, studying and observing old toys. Children look at patterns and similarities and differences. During the inspection week, they were carefully examining a variety of fruit and vegetables and with help undertook a simple investigation to find out what happened when celery was put in different colours of water. Through the use of suitable stories, such as 'Handa's Surprise', children are gaining a sound understanding that not all places are the same and that other children may live in situations and climates very different from their own. In the reception class, these activities are built on successfully through a range of appropriate science, history and geography based activities. For example, in geography they compare the differences between life in Kenya and in Great Britain. Children have many opportunities to explore freely with materials, such as sand and water and to select materials to build models for a variety of purposes. Related to the topic of 'Transport', children used recycled materials for building model vehicles by effectively cutting, sticking and joining the materials together. They are given opportunities to plant seeds and they develop a sound understanding of what seeds need in order to grow. In both the nursery and the reception class, children are provided with good opportunities to use technology to support their learning. In the reception class children used a camera appropriately to record their three-dimensional artwork. They learn how to use programmable toys and they have regular access to information technology. Their computer skills, such as controlling the 'mouse', are developing well. Children are given appropriate opportunities, in both the nursery and the reception class, to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through first hand experiences and effective use is made of questioning to encourage them to think about how things work and why they happen.

Physical development

52. The majority of children achieve the desirable learning outcomes by the time they are five. Most children are well coordinated. In the nursery, in the outside play area, they move about confidently and without bumping into one another and they maneuver a range of wheeled toys with reasonable control. There were no opportunities to observe physical education lessons. However, scrutiny of staff' planning shows that children are provided with appropriate opportunities to use a good range of small apparatus and develop skills, such as controlling balls, in both the nursery and reception class. There is an appropriate selection of large apparatus to enable children to develop their balancing and climbing skills. Staff provide many good opportunities, throughout the nursery and the reception class, for children to develop their manipulative skills. Children use scissors, pencils, crayons and paintbrushes with increasing precision and control and they thread laces through card and use small toys and equipment with increasing skill.

Creative development

53. Most children achieve the desirable learning outcomes by the age of five. Staff provide many worthwhile opportunities for children to develop their creative abilities. Sometimes other areas of learning are used as an appropriate stimulus. For example, in the nursery, children made effective models of trees and fruit with plasticine related to the story of 'Handa's Surprise'. Children are given daily opportunities for painting and they enjoy experimenting with the effects of paint and colour. They make models and pictures using a variety of materials confidently, such as paint, pencils, crayons, clay and collage materials and learn a variety of techniques such as blow painting, finger painting and printing. In the reception class, children look at the work of famous artists such as Guiseppe Archimboldo and, using

real fruits and vegetables, make good attempts at making a three dimensional picture in a similar style. Children enjoy exploring the sounds made by a good range of simple musical instruments. In planned music sessions, staff give children appropriate opportunities to listen to sounds and to pay increasing attention to detail, such as the differences between high and low pitch. Most of the children are developing a clear understanding of this and used it well to develop a 'pitch dance'. Children have frequent opportunities to sing and they know a number of songs. A wide range of resources and opportunities effectively encourage children to participate in imaginative play. Other opportunities are used well by staff to encourage children to respond to what they see, smell, touch and feel, such as in science when exploring a variety of different fruit.

54. Attitudes to learning in both the nursery and the reception class are generally good. Children enjoy participating in a wide range of activities and are enthusiastic learners. During their time in nursery and in the reception class, the children learn to share equipment and to work and play harmoniously together. Overall, they behave well and with consideration for others and they are polite and friendly to visitors.
55. The quality of teaching is good overall and consistently good in the reception class. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teaching is at its best where the teacher is fully aware of individual children's needs and responds accordingly. The work is well planned and this enables children to have appropriate experiences in all six areas of learning. A strong emphasis is placed on children's language through practical activities. Priority is appropriately given to personal and social development, language and literacy and mathematics. Assessment of children's attainment levels is undertaken regularly in the nursery and reception class and overall levels of attainment are assessed on entry to the nursery and to the reception class. Information gained from assessments is used appropriately to inform planning. Staff are kind and caring but firm and consistent in their dealings with children and they have high expectations of children's behaviour. Praise and encouragement are used effectively to extend children's learning.
56. The early years are satisfactorily managed by the Key Stage 1 co-ordinator. However, she has had insufficient opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in the nursery.

ENGLISH

57. In 1999 national tests for pupils aged eleven the school's average score in English was well below the national average and well below average in comparison with similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining the expected level four or higher was well below the national average and a lower proportion of pupils than that found nationally attained the higher level 5. Standards have fluctuated since the last inspection. However, the introduction of the national literacy strategy and booster classes have contributed to the raising of standards. The current pupils in Year 6 have made good progress over time and their attainment is average overall. These standards are similar to those in the last inspection. In the 1999 test for pupils aged seven, the school's average score was below the national average in reading and in comparison with similar schools it was very low. In writing, standards were in line with the national average and in line with standards for similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 3 was well below the national average in reading and below the national average in writing. Standards have fluctuated since the last inspection but have improved overall. The current pupils in Year 2 attain average standards in English overall. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls.
58. By the age of seven, pupils have made good progress in speaking, listening and reading. Speaking and listening skills are sound and standards of reading are average. Progress in writing is satisfactory overall and standards are average. There is little evidence of high attaining pupils writing at above average levels. Most of the infant pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. The introduction of big books, both fiction and non-fiction, which the class share together with the teacher, give pupils the opportunity to listen carefully to stories and answer questions. Pupils in Year 2 usually speak clearly and confidently. Progress in reading is good. Most infant pupils use their increasing knowledge of letter sounds, picture clues and context to help them read unfamiliar words. In Year 2, many pupils read their books confidently and accurately. High attaining pupils have good ideas about what might happen next in a story and read with expression and appropriate intonation related to speech marks. Most pupils know what an author is and what an illustrator does and some can describe the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. Progress in writing is good in the early stages of the infants. In Year 2, progress is generally satisfactory but it should be better particularly for high attaining pupils. By the age of seven most pupils are able to write in sentences sometimes demarcated by full stops and capital letters and spell simple words correctly. Some pupils make good attempts at spelling more difficult words, for example, 'crewid' (crowded) and 'fuchun' (fortune). Pupils undertake a satisfactory range of writing including poetry, book reviews, factual writing and writing instructions such as on 'How to Make a Kite'. However, the teachers are too dependant on the use of work sheets that require a minimal amount of writing, even for high attaining pupils'. Consequently there are very few examples of pupils undertaking sustained pieces of unaided writing. Also, there is little opportunity for pupils to develop their writing in other subjects, also because of over reliance on work sheets. Pupils' hand writing is mainly accurately formed and consistent in size and high attaining pupils are beginning to join letters together. The overall presentation of work is satisfactory.
59. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening in the juniors and Year 6 pupils achieve average attainment. Most pupils listen attentively and respond confidently to questions on a variety of texts. For example, in Year 3, after reading three extracts from stories writing by Alan Ahlberg, pupils sensibly discussed the style of the author and contrasted the characters portrayed in the text. By the end of the juniors, most pupils develop their ideas thoughtfully, such as putting forward sound reasons for and against evacuation in their work in the history of World War 2. Progress in reading is good and standards in Year 6 are average. Pupils read not only non-fiction books but also fiction books written by a variety of authors. They

are confident when taking turns to read aloud and are able to self-correct. By the age of eleven many pupils read fluently and accurately. They give reasoned justification for their personal responses to texts such as when comparing 'Carries War' by Nina Bowden with 'Fireweed' by Jill Patson-Walsh. There is a suitable variety of books from which pupils can select and high attaining pupils read some quite demanding texts. Most pupils know how to locate books in the school library. Overall progress in writing is good by Year 5 and Year 6. However in the lower part of the juniors it is satisfactory and many pupils' handwriting does not contain joined letters. Additionally there are not enough opportunities, especially for high attaining pupils, to develop writing in other subjects. The standard of writing in Year 6 is average. Most of the Year 6 pupils spell fairly accurately and use grammatical and punctuation skills systematically. Handwriting is joined and legible and sometimes fluent and the overall presentation of work is good. It is generally neatly written and set out clearly. The introduction of 'Writers' Workshops' are giving pupils many more opportunities to undertake writing for a variety of purposes including stating facts, writing stories, poetry and letters, and expressing opinions. Also high attaining pupils have chance to write at greater length. For example, one pupil wrote an interesting, descriptive and lengthy story of very good quality entitled 'A Dream Come True'. Pupils use information technology to draft and re-draft their work and also write newspaper reports. They are uncertain how to cut and paste text or to undo their typing quickly.

60. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported throughout the school and make good progress in speaking, listening and literacy. The THRASS (Teaching, Handwriting, Reading and Spelling) programme and the support these pupils receive for basic skills have a very positive effect on their learning. In a very good lesson pupils impressively used 'digraph' and 'trigraph' accurately when they were talking about letter sounds. Other initiatives being undertaken, such as the 'additional literacy strategy', 'Writers' Workshops', the 'progression in phonics' approach and the 'booster classes' are also contributing to raising standards. In addition, classes are grouped by ability in the juniors and this makes it easier for teachers to ensure a good match between the work set and the ability levels of the pupils.
61. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good throughout the school. They are nearly always well behaved and show interest and enjoyment in their work. Virtually all pupils enjoy reading and handle books and equipment with care and respect. Many of the pupils show enthusiasm and pleasure in literacy lessons. They usually concentrate well on their tasks and persevere when they find tasks difficult. Through shared reading activities and group tasks pupils demonstrate that they are able to co-operate well together and respect each other's point of view.
62. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and it is generally good. Teachers have successfully implemented the national literacy strategy and every class is participating in a literacy hour. This is having a positive effect on raising standards. Planning is good and resources are well prepared which ensures pupils' time is used efficiently. In the good teaching, teachers make effective use of questioning to assess pupils, challenge their thinking and move their learning forward. All teachers have a clear understanding of how to teach grammar, punctuation and spelling and this appropriately develops pupils' knowledge in these areas. Pupils are usually well managed and organised and a satisfactory range of teaching strategies is used. Teaching is at its best when the pace of lessons is brisk and teachers inspire interest and enthusiasm in their pupils and have high expectations for them. However, occasionally the work is not sufficiently challenging especially for high attaining pupils in writing at the end of the infants and the lower stages of the juniors. The systematic assessment of pupils' work is generally used effectively to identify their learning needs and to aid planning. Work is marked consistently, but some teachers do not annotate the pupils'

work sufficiently or set clear targets for improvement. Although homework is undertaken in English, there are no home/school reading diaries and many parents are insufficiently informed about progress in reading and the ways in which they can help their children at home. Also, because of an insufficient number of reading books related to the national literacy strategy, pupils in the juniors do not have opportunities to take their books home to enable them to reinforce or extend the learning.

63. The literacy provision has been reviewed and an action plan has been implemented. The school has set clear targets for improvement, which are currently being met. Where possible, most of the issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed. The English co-ordinator is working hard to raise standards by introducing new strategies and developing resources. He has monitored teaching and learning in the juniors but not in the infants and therefore does not have a sufficient overview of practice throughout the school.

MATHEMATICS

64. In the 1999 national tests for pupils aged eleven, the school's average score was below the average for all schools and well below average when compared with similar schools. However, the results were considerably better than in 1998 and improvement was greater than in English and science. The introduction of the national numeracy strategy and the extra support for pupils in mathematics have contributed to the raising of standards. The current pupils in Year 6 attain average standards overall. In the tests for pupils aged seven the average score matched the average for all schools and was below average compared with similar schools. Standards were slightly lower than in 1998. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level 2 or better was slightly below average. The current pupils in Year 2 attain average standards over all. The inspection finds less significant differences between boys' and girls' performance than in the national tests. Standards are similar to those in the last inspection.
65. Infant pupils make good overall progress especially in their knowledge and understanding of number. The numeracy framework determines the content of pupils' work but the teachers set tasks at different levels of challenge to match pupils' prior attainment. Pupils are developing competent understanding of place value and computation. High attainers in Year 1 order numbers accurately to 20 and beyond. In a good lesson they identified numbers up to 100. They also show a developing knowledge of basic addition and subtraction. They name common shapes and describe their properties. Pupils' work in Year 2 also indicates generally good progress over time but it is more uneven than in Year 1. High attaining pupils add multiples of 10 to two-figure numbers and order numbers accurately to 100. Regular teaching of mental calculation is helping to improve pupils' recall of multiplying by 2 and 5 but a small group of more able pupils still took too long to mentally calculate 3×2 . Confidence in addition and subtraction is growing but not always quickly enough. Several pupils identify odd and even numbers accurately and have competent understanding of simple fractions. High attaining pupils recognise right angles and accurately name three dimensional shapes including cuboid and sphere. Low attaining pupils make steady consistent progress. Infant pupils are making at least satisfactory progress in their use of mathematical terminology.
66. Progress is satisfactory in Year 3 and Year 4 but good in Year 5 and Year 6. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 are organised across the two classes according to their prior attainment. However, the spread of ability is still wide in both classes and also results in a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the lower set. Year 4 pupils in the upper set are steadily improving their speed of mental recall but their insecure knowledge of

basic number facts affects their rate of progress. Only a minority calculates 33×2 with any reasonable speed. The highest attainers make good suggestions for adding two numbers by identifying doubles, for example $100 + 110$ becomes $105 + 105$. In the lower set almost half of the Year 3 pupils struggled to add together numbers below 10 but improved as the lesson developed. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are organised into three main groups with an additional teacher for the booster class arrangements who teaches mainly Year 6. Work in pupils' books indicates good progress has been made since September 1999 in both year groups. Average and high attaining pupils in Year 5 make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of numbers, the number system and shape. In a good lesson pupils' initial uncertain grasp of how to convert fractions into percentages improved as they played a special game of dominoes. The teachers' clear explanations also helped them to improve their knowledge of prime numbers to at least 20. In another good lesson low attaining pupils use of rounding numbers up or down, in order to solve number problems, improved as a result of the teacher's high expectations and careful use of questions. Many of the high attaining pupils in Year 6 accurately convert fractions to decimals and percentages and multiply decimal numbers by 10 and 100. They also order decimal numbers to at least two places. Understanding of negative numbers is good. Regular mental sessions and revision of knowledge of number facts is helping Year 6 pupils, and given enough time many achieve accurate results. However, they often do not calculate quickly enough. Overall knowledge of shape is average. High attainers describe accurately the differences between the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes and identify lines of symmetry. Standards in using and organising data are average in both key stages. Pupils are learning to organise their work, try out different approaches to solving problems and to check their findings. They also have opportunities to explain their thinking. They do not have enough chances to use mathematics in other subjects.

67. Pupils throughout the school have good attitudes towards mathematics. They respond well to the opportunities to improve their speed of mental recall. They usually behave well and relate well to each other and to adults.
68. The overall quality of teaching is good but consistently effective in Year 5 and Year 6. All lessons in the infants and juniors are well structured in line with the numeracy framework. Teaching is best at the beginning of lessons and in the plenaries at the end. Teachers make good use of questions to improve pupils' speed of mental recall. For example, in a lesson in Year 4 the teacher reminded pupils of the lesson's objectives and then questioned pupils' grasp of the key skills that were being developed. Brisk pace in the mental sessions is a positive feature. In a good lesson in Year 5 the teacher's expectations of a rapid response helped low attaining pupils to improve their knowledge of multiplying by three and six. The most effective teaching sustained the challenge for pupils throughout the lessons but in about a third the pace of learning slowed in the middle part. Pupils are managed well and good relationships are fostered. Teachers have implemented the numeracy framework well and now need to give more rigorous attention to the use of mathematics in other subjects.
69. The school has taken effective action to raise standards especially by the age of eleven. The mathematics co-ordinator has developed the subject well in the last two years and has monitored some of the teaching. Clear and appropriate targets have been set for the subject's development. A gifted pupil in Year 6 attends mathematics lessons in the local comprehensive school and two pupils currently in Year 5 will do the same.

SCIENCE

70. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for pupils aged eleven the school's average score was well below the average for all schools and very low in comparison with similar schools. Although the 1999 results were better than those in 1998 pupils' performance, taking the years 1996-9 together, has been worse than in English and mathematics. Boys have performed better than girls. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level 4 or higher, in the 1999 tests, was also well below average. Overall attainment in the current Year 6 is below average. In the last inspection standards were average. In the 1999 National Curriculum statutory teacher assessments for seven-year-olds, overall attainment was well below the national average. At the time of the last inspection standards at age seven were broadly average. Standards have fallen since then and attainment in the current Year 2 is below average.
71. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are below average because:
- during the last two years science has not been a main focus for raising standards;
 - the school has not had a science co-ordinator to lead, support and guide, and there has been no local education authority advisor;
 - schemes of work are not fully aligned to the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidelines resulting in gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, particularly at the end of the junior years;
 - there are weaknesses in pupils' skills in experimental and investigative science because of an overuse of printed worksheets which limit opportunities for practical work.
72. By the end of Year 2, pupils use simple equipment and carry out some practical tasks. They recognise and name basic properties of materials and predict which material will soak up liquid quickly. They predict which materials will allow electricity to flow through and which materials are better for blocking out light. Discussion with pupils indicates that they are making progress, though there is some confusion in their understanding, for example when discussing how sound travels. However, tracking pupils' progress through a scrutiny of their work was not a productive exercise. Much of the work is recorded on printed worksheets which are not always dated; there are few differences in work set for Year 1 and Year 2 pupils in the mixed-age classes. The majority of the pupils in Year 1 are making sound progress because the work is mostly pitched at Level 1 of the National Curriculum.
73. By the end of the juniors, pupils know about prediction and fair testing but lack skills in recording results and presenting conclusions using a sufficient range of methods. Work in the middle years, for example on forces, is very basic and much of it is copied from the board. Work on electricity repeats work done in the infants in health and safety and simple circuits. Pupils have learnt what the conventional symbols mean and can explain what would happen to a circuit if one of the components was removed. There is insufficient evidence of pupils being given opportunities to plan a simple investigation and follow a line of enquiry, making choices, and exploring evidence to answer questions. When investigative work is provided, such as the study of mini-beasts, the task is left too open-ended resulting in pupils in one class not handling live creatures sensitively and in others not knowing how to use resources appropriately. The range and quality of work improve significantly in Year 5 and Year 6 but there are too many gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding to be bridged in one or two years. This was exemplified during a revision lesson on 'food chains'. The teacher checked pupils' knowledge of how 'food' is produced in green plants and pupils gave responses such as 'leaves give off chlorophyll' thus illustrating their confusion.
74. The quality of learning and pupils' progress are inconsistent. Overall, pupils have very positive attitudes and make good progress in the reception class and Year 1. Progress is impeded when both year groups in mixed-age classes do the same level of work. Often

insufficient account is taken of what pupils already know and can do and this slows down progress especially in Year 3 and Year 4. Pupils in Years 5 and Year 6 advance well in their ability to predict based on scientific understanding but are less secure about explaining cause and effect and drawing conclusions. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by classroom assistants and generally make sound progress.

75. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. They are keen to learn and co-operate well. This was well exemplified in a Year 1/Year 2 class where they were testing materials for light and making spectacles. Teaching objectives to encourage pupils to work as a team, share resources and take turns, were successfully achieved. Also, pupils in Year 3 and Year 4, when collecting mini-beats from outside, conducted themselves very well. When confronted with large beetles and spiders, they supported each other very well!
76. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned with a clear structure. Where a lesson spans a two-hour block of time, the pace slows down and sustaining and maintaining interest, particularly of infant pupils, is therefore a challenging task. Learning objectives are usually clearly specified. The lessons start with a quick review of pupils' previous learning. Questioning is often aimed at eliciting factual responses. Questions, which lead pupils to consider cause and effect, are asked too infrequently. For example, when studying conditions necessary for cress to grow pupils were not encouraged to consider why in some pots leaves were yellow. However, the questioning style is very positive and gives pupils confidence to respond. The relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and based on mutual respect and trust. Teachers do not always grasp opportunities to build upon pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. This is partly due to pupils recording one word or short sentence responses in blank spaces on worksheets. Marking is good in Year 5 and Year 6 but generally it is not sufficiently rigorous and pupils repeat spelling errors which have not been corrected, particularly of new scientific vocabulary. Inaccurate conclusions drawn from investigative work are sometimes marked as though they were correct.
77. The supply of resources is sufficient but they are not organised, catalogued and properly labelled. An audit of resources is needed to remove those, such as 'mercury thermometers', that present health and safety hazards.
78. The headteacher has undertaken some monitoring of the teaching and learning and is well aware of some of the issues that need addressing. A newly qualified teacher, who is well-qualified to lead the subject, will take up her responsibilities in September. She is keen to start and enthusiastic about improving standards.

ART AND DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

79. By the ages of seven and eleven standards of work in art are broadly average and similar to those found in the last inspection. Pupils use a satisfactory range of two and three-dimensional media and employ a number of different techniques. Infant pupils produce brightly coloured pictures and paintings that are imaginative and attractive, for example, pictures of boats and spring flowers created for the school art exhibition. In the reception class, pupils looked at the work of Guiseppe Archimboldo and, using real fruit and vegetables, created effective three-dimensional pictures in the same style. Pupils, in Year 1 and Year 2, handle paintbrushes with good control and carefully reproduce a picture of a field of poppies in the style of Monet. Sometimes, artwork is appropriately linked to other areas of the curriculum. Pupils have produced quite detailed observational drawings of Victorian artefacts and collage pictures of men and women in Victorian dress. Junior pupils effectively develop the skills they have acquired in the infants and use a wider variety of media to express their ideas. They have a sound understanding of the work of artists and

apply that knowledge to their own work. For example, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 drew scenes of Willenhall and Llangollen in the style of Lowry. In Year 3 and Year 4, pupils develop a clear understanding of complimentary colours and know that they help to make pictures brighter when used together.

80. Virtually all pupils, including those with special educational, make satisfactory progress in developing artistic skills and awareness. Throughout the infants and juniors stages pupils show an increasing capability to record ideas confidently and to represent what they see with a fair degree of accuracy. They develop a sound understanding of how different techniques produce different effects such as the way impressionist painters used brush stroke and colours to achieve their special effects.
81. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They enjoy the practical aspect of the subject and work with enthusiasm. They concentrate well and their interest in the task is sustained. They work independently and co-operate in groups with very little adult support. They use materials and equipment carefully and treat them with respect.
82. The teaching of art is satisfactory overall. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Lessons are organised appropriately and resources well prepared. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound and classroom support assistants are used effectively. A satisfactory range of teaching strategies is used and relationships with pupils are good. Often art is appropriately linked to other areas of the curriculum. Pupils are sometimes given opportunities to work with artists. For example, some pupils worked with a local ceramic artist. Other initiatives, such as an art exhibition for the whole school, successfully stimulate pupils' enthusiasm and interest in the subject. Information technology is used soundly to help develop pupils' skills.
83. The art co-ordinator has only undertaken this role for a short time. She has good subject knowledge, has reviewed the art policy and is currently reviewing the scheme of work in the light of the new curriculum which begins in September of the current year.
84. There was insufficient evidence of pupils' work in design and technology to evaluate standards. No lessons were observed during the inspection. Teachers' planning is satisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

85. These subjects are taught alternatively and only a few lessons were observed. Pupils' work from the current academic year was scrutinised, subject planning and assessments of work were analysed and the subjects were discussed with pupils. Average standards are being achieved in history by the ages of seven and eleven. In geography, standards are average in Year 6. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about geography in the infants though there is some evidence of shortcomings. Standards in both subjects are broadly similar to those in the previous inspection.
86. The major focus of work in geography in Year 5 and Year 6 has been a study of a contrasting locality in the United Kingdom. Teaching is based on the local education authority's project on Llangollen and Willenhall. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their trip to Llangollen and show a good understanding of how physical and human features give places their character. Pupils' written accounts show that they have appreciated how local amenities in Llangollen influence the nature and location of activities, such as tourism. They recognise the differences between urban and rural development and recognise there are differences in employment patterns. They have applied their numeracy skills in drawing up a graph

showing, for example, that a higher than average percentage of people are employed in the service industry in Llangollen because of tourism. They use new technical vocabulary confidently and accurately. They also use compasses and atlases including grid references to locate places. They draw relevant maps. This is a substantial project, well-collated and organised and provides ample evidence of pupils increasing their knowledge and understanding and using appropriate geographical skills. However, pupils have not studied other important areas of geography in sufficient depth. Year 2 pupils have made a study of the immediate locality and describe features of a local route. They have produced an address with help from parents. The level of the work undertaken is below what would be expected for pupils of this age nationally. Pupils' work in the reception shows a higher level of competence in drawing a simple route from home to school.

87. In history, Year 2 pupils have been undertaking a topic on Victorians and they show a developing sense of chronology by accurately using terms about the passing of time, and by making clear distinctions between old and new. They also compare aspects of their own lives with life in Victorian times. Pupils have visited Shugborough House and have produced a museum guide to the artefacts. Pupils' work in Year 5 and Year 6, on 'Willenhall at War', has highlighted how the local community was affected by the Second World War. Through this study pupils are taught how to use historical evidence to write accounts analysing and discussing different points of view. On this topic skilful teaching enhances learning and pupils apply themselves with sustained concentration and interest.
88. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in geography and history. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and worked diligently in the lessons seen. Pupils talk well about their work and their oral responses indicate that most have grasped new information in both subjects. Their skills in deducing key issues from evidence are not well developed; this is partly due to not being given enough opportunities to explore these issues in writing and partly due to teachers not facilitating links between different aspects of learning. Pupils listen and pay attention well. For example, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 watched a brief video clip of footage on evacuation. They followed the events well and contributed to discussions with interest. Most pupils' behaviour is very good. They share resources sensibly and co-operate amicably.
89. The small amount of teaching observed was mainly satisfactory. Overall, teachers plan lessons well and use resources effectively. The lessons have clear structure and pupils know what is expected of them. The pace of teaching varies according to the teachers' skills and the length of the lessons. Brisk pace was sustained in a good discussion in a history lesson in a Year 5 and Year 6 class. The teacher's careful questions encouraged pupils to consider the effects of evacuation on not only the evacuees but also the people receiving them. The pupils' interest was sustained throughout. Teachers recognise the importance of first hand knowledge and experiences and many field trips, visits to the museums and artefacts enhance the curriculum. Standards are not higher partly because there is too limited coverage of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study in both subjects and because there are too few opportunities for pupils to carry out research, investigation, and recording of their observations and findings in writing. Where such opportunities are provided, for example in the study on Llangollen, standards are better. The quality of marking of pupils' work is too variable. In Year 5 and Year 6 the marking often assists pupils in further refining their work but this is not consistent practice across the school. In general, resources are too few.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

90. Only a limited amount of direct teaching of information and communications technology was observed. However, pupils were observed using computers wherever possible and discussions were held with them. In addition, discussion was held with a group of Year 6 pupils to ascertain their level of skill and knowledge. Samples of assessment were also scrutinised. Generally, pupils make good progress and attainment at ages seven and eleven is broadly average. Standards at the time of the last inspection were good.
91. Infant pupils have regular opportunities to use a computer and learn the importance of clear instructions when controlling electronic devices, for example the “Pip” programmable toy. Confidence in basic operations is developed well and by the age of seven pupils use the mouse and keyboard competently. They are aware of the function of the cursor and know how to save, delete and print text. They construct and interpret simple graphs, for example on favourite foods. Pupils use the computer to write simple sentences about themselves using the space bar, shift key and caps lock.
92. Junior pupils also use information and control technology regularly, in pairs and independently. Although pupils talk enthusiastically about their work, including occasions when they have used CD-ROM or how multi media can be used, their knowledge of appropriate terminology is too limited. They are well aware of the importance of information technology in the wider world. By the age of eleven pupils knowledge of the computer’s applications, and their skills in word processing, are sound. Year 6 pupils know how to save and retrieve their work including the use of floppy disks. Some are uncertain how to create a file without help. They know the major commands required for the word processor and change the appearance of text to present their work in an interesting fashion. Pupils spoken to were very uncertain how to cut and paste text and did not know how to quickly ‘undo’ their typing. Their knowledge of how to store data was also rather limited. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 were introduced to the use of new laptop computers and a spreadsheet programme during the inspection. Most needed help to save data and retrieve information but caught on quickly and made good progress. Pupils throughout the school make good use of art programmes. Their use of the Internet and electronic mail is at an early stage.
93. Pupils have very positive attitudes to information and communications technology. They are enthusiastic and many express the view that they would like to use computers more often. They co-operate well with one another and treat the equipment with care not only when they work with others but also when they work independently.
94. Little direct teaching was observed but the help given to pupils by teachers, non-teaching staff and parent helpers is generally good. The use of the laptop computers and spreadsheet programme was demonstrated clearly. Pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 were suitably helped to devise their own data bases which would later be fed into the computer. The headteacher has spearheaded developments in the subject and is strongly committed to improving the provision. Staff training is a priority and computer hardware and software are being expanded. A good policy provides guidance for teachers but its use has not been monitored.

MUSIC

95. Only a few lessons were observed. Pupils were also observed singing in assemblies and, wherever possible, their playing of musical instruments was evaluated. At the end of the infants and juniors the majority of pupils attain the expected standards for their age. However, a significant minority of high attaining pupils achieve above average standards. In the last inspection standards were above average.

96. In the infants, pupils are beginning to develop a sound understanding of musical elements. Most differentiate between high and low sounds and use their voices to reproduce them. They develop a good sense of rhythm and sing enthusiastically and tunefully. From an early age pupils are encouraged to listen attentively to recorded music. In the juniors, most pupils develop appropriate control of their voices and sing a good range of songs with an awareness of the musical elements of the pieces they are singing. When listening to music, pupils identify the changes in character and mood and respond accordingly. They sing songs with two parts and maintain their parts well. They are successfully developing rhythm and co-ordinate body movements to their voices, for example when enthusiastically performing 'Jo'.
97. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the infants and juniors. They are given the opportunity to learn the recorder and there is a thriving recorder group, which on the week of the inspection played confidently in a whole school assembly. Junior pupils have the opportunity to learn a good range of instruments and some reach a high standard. All pupils also have the opportunity to participate in a choir after school.
98. Overall, pupils' attitudes to music are good. They generally behave well, join in discussions about music and most join in enthusiastically during singing. They understand the importance of listening carefully in order to appreciate the sounds they hear, and this helps them perform as a group.
99. The teaching of music is good. Good use is made of a teacher with a high level of subject knowledge who teaches the majority of lessons in the juniors. In a good lesson the teacher's knowledge of how to project the voice and control breathing helped to improve the quality of pupils' singing. Lessons are well planned in the infants and juniors and the pace of the teaching is brisk. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and this has a positive effect on their learning.
100. The subject is supported by an appropriate scheme of work, which gives effective support to non-specialist teachers. Pupils have the opportunity to learn to play recorder, violin, woodwind, brass and percussion and about 20 per cent receive tuition. An annual musical evening is held each year and pupils have the opportunity to perform at the National Indoor Arena.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

101. Only three lessons were observed, two in games and one in gymnastics. In the work seen, standards at age seven were above average and at eleven they were average. In the last inspection physical education was not observed in the infants and in the work seen in the juniors standards were below average.
102. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress in controlling a ball with their feet. They work sensibly and use the space well. Most pupils in Year 2 are agile, participate well and make good use of space. They are developing good understanding of the effects of exercise on their bodies. They work carefully and safely and co-operate well in pairs. Their skills of sending and receiving a ball are good. Pupils in a Year 5 and Year 6 lesson showed competent control of their bodies when they changed shape, speed and direction. However, several had little poise and unrefined posture. Pupils used floor space satisfactorily and handled equipment carefully.
103. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes. They listen attentively to the teachers' instructions and respond particularly well to opportunities to evaluate their work.

104. The teaching is good and in all lessons helps pupils to make good progress. Instructions are given clearly and lessons are well structured. Time is used productively and demonstration helps pupils to refine their skills. In the good lesson in gymnastics the teacher's regular evaluation of pupils' performance not only helped them to improve but also maintained a brisk pace in the learning.
105. The school's planning indicates that the curriculum for physical education is suitably broad and includes swimming when pupils are in Year 5. Extra-curricular activities in sports, including soccer, cross country and athletics, enhance the curriculum. Walsall Football Club makes regular visits to the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

106. Measured against the levels identified in the locally agreed syllabus attainment is in line with what is expected at the ages of seven and eleven. Standards are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection.
107. Pupils achieve a sound understanding of Christianity as well as a broad range of other sets of beliefs and values. Their understanding of the relationships between their individual needs and aspirations and their commitment to those around them is well promoted as part of social and personal development. This is well illustrated by Year 6 pupils who wrote very sensitively about 'Hopes for myself for my friends'. Their mature reflections are also captured well in writing on 'It is God's World Sometimes We Spoil'. Pupils' understanding of different religions and their awareness of the stories of the main events in the lives of religious leaders were enhanced in a Year 3 and Year 4 lesson on Sikhism. Pupils learnt about personal heroism and the inspirations of the Sikh Gurus in establishing the Khalsa. They explored how some ceremonies, such as Bai Sakhi, unite groups and individuals together. Infant pupils explored why birthdays are special and learn that these are celebrated differently in different faiths. All pupils show a deep interest in the subject; they listen attentively and show a growing understanding. Discussion with Year 6 pupils produced accurate comments on how and why Christians and Muslims make special journeys, such as a pilgrimage and hajj. Year 6 pupils have a sound geographical knowledge of where Mecca, Medina and Judea (in the old map) are but pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 could not locate India or Punjab in the atlas. Pupils are keen to learn new vocabulary but are not given effective support on how you spell these words; hence new and unfamiliar words are often spelt incorrectly in pupils' books. Pupils' learning is enhanced when they are given opportunities to write in their own words. However, in the middle years, much of the work is copied from the board, and in the infant classes work is frequently recorded on printed worksheets, thereby limiting pupils' opportunities to express their own views and beliefs. These worksheets make little demands on pupils' skills.
108. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some strengths especially in Year 5 and Year 6. Teaching of the oldest pupils is based on secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. Teachers communicate their own interest and enthusiasm. Resources for the lessons are prepared and used well. The introductions to lessons in the infants and in Year 5 and Year 6 carefully establish what pupils already know and then build upon it. Learning is often enhanced by lively questions. Marking is not used consistently or with confidence in most classes, except in the upper juniors, to suggest how pupils could improve. Assessment is not used sufficiently to guide lesson planning.
109. The scheme of work supports teachers well in providing pupils with opportunities for learning in line with the agreed syllabus. The subject is enhanced by visits to local places of worship, but these do not generally include non-Christian places.