

INSPECTION REPORT

GRANGEHURST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Coventry

LEA area: Coventry

Unique reference number: 103663

Acting Headteacher: Miss K Ward

Reporting inspector: Mrs C A Field
9479

Dates of inspection: 18th to 21st March 2002

Inspection number: 194457

Full 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 category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Anderton Road
Alderman's Green
Coventry

Postcode: CV6 6JN

Telephone number: 02476 365999

Fax number: 02476 367814

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs G White

Date of previous inspection: May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
9479	Mrs C A Field	Registered inspector		Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning What should the school do to improve further?
19335	Mrs S Dixon	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?
25074	Mrs J Cox	Team inspector	Special educational needs Equal opportunities English as an additional language English Music	
7593	Mr J Collier	Team inspector	Information and communication technology History Religious education	
21904	Mrs D Gale	Team inspector	Science Geography	Curricular opportunities
27369	Mrs C Powell	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology	
25771	Mr P Sandall	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	Leadership and management

The inspection contractor was:

The University of Birmingham
Schools Inspection Unit
School of Education
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	23
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	25
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	26
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	29
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	30
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	34

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the north eastern suburbs of Coventry and located within an Education Action Zone (EAZ) set up to aid regeneration in the neighbourhood. Pupils who attend the school live locally and come from a mixture of private and local authority housing. Most pupils are from white European backgrounds but a few have a different heritage, for example Indian, Pakistani, Chinese or Black Caribbean. Some 12% of pupils speak English as an additional language. Half of these are at an early stage in learning English and receive additional support to assist with their literacy development. A small number of refugee families from Bosnia have settled into the community and six of these children are currently being integrated into school. There are 412 pupils on roll: 228 boys and 184 girls aged between four and eleven years. Children's attainment on entry into reception is below the level expected for their age. Around 20% of pupils are eligible for free school meals which is broadly average when compared to other primary schools. Some 22% of pupils have special educational needs that cover a range of difficulties. Three of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils in school with special educational needs is about average. The school has experienced a significantly high turnover of staff since its previous inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Grangehurst Primary is an effective school. The ethos is very caring and supportive and the school enables pupils from a wide range of backgrounds to learn together successfully. The acting headteacher, supported by a highly effective management team, is providing strong leadership and has rightly identified the key targets that will enable the school to press ahead to raise standards. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good features. Recruitment problems and other staffing issues over the past few years have slowed down the pace of improvement to some extent, but since September there has been a more stable structure and a lot of ground has been made up. Standards are broadly average in most subjects but have the potential to be better as improvement kicks in. The team spirit in school is good and everyone is keen to play their part in moving the school forward. The school provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is very well led and effectively managed; the clear focus on what needs to be improved, backed up by the good monitoring and evaluation programme is having a beneficial impact on raising standards.
- Pupils have good attitudes to school, relationships are very good and pupils show deep respect for the views and beliefs of others. As a result the school is racially harmonious.
- Pupils who learn English as an additional language receive good quality support from reception onwards and this helps them to keep up with their class mates.
- The school pays very good attention to ensuring that all pupils, irrespective of ethnicity, gender or ability are given equality of opportunity to succeed and the provision for their spiritual, cultural, moral, social and health education is very good.
- The school has forged strong links with parents, partner schools and the community, and these are adding value to the curricular experiences being provided.

What could be improved

- Although standards have improved, they could be higher still by eleven years.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

In 1997 the school was found to have serious weaknesses in the standards and quality of education. Three key issues were identified concerning raising attainment and improving the progress of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and those who were learning English as an additional language. The school has made reasonable progress overall in improving these aspects and has received good support from the local education authority in this work. The school has moved forward in other respects too. For example, support from the EAZ for information and communication technology (ICT) development is having a tangible impact on improving pupils' ICT skills. In 2001 the school received an Achievement Award in recognition of the substantial improvement made in pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests. The school is doing all that can reasonably be expected to improve the quality of education and is judged to have sound capacity to continue to do this.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	C	C	D	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	E	D	D	C	
Science	D	B	D	B	

NB The school's results were originally compared to other schools with between 8-20% of pupils eligible for free-school meals. The inspection team judges the level of eligibility to be just over 20% and has compared results with this benchmark group.

The standards achieved by eleven-year-olds in the 2001 National Curriculum tests were below average in all tested subjects. When compared to similar schools, the standards were average in English and mathematics and above average in science. The performance of boys and girls was broadly similar to the national picture. The standards achieved by seven-year-olds in the 2001 National Curriculum tests present a more positive picture. Standards were average in reading and mathematics, and below average in writing. When compared to similar schools standards were well above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing.

The school's improvement in standards is keeping pace with the national trend, but there is clearly room for improvement in order that the better standards attained in the tests at seven are sustained at eleven years. The school is tackling the weaknesses identified by the test results through a range of strategies. For example, pupils who are a little behind in literacy and numeracy are benefiting from additional work and increased support. Those pupils who are gifted or talented are set more challenging work, though there are missed opportunities

to extend these pupils' literacy skills in other subjects. Additionally, good practice in setting group targets in literacy and numeracy is a feature that could usefully be extended across the curriculum, particularly in science. The school's targets for pupils' performance in the 2002 National Curriculum tests are reasonable.

The youngest children start school with below average levels of skills, knowledge and understanding, particularly in communication, language and literacy. By the time they move into Year 1 standards are still below the level expected even though they have made sound progress. Inspection evidence shows standards in Year 2 to be average in all subjects except geography, where they are below average. Most pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science and steady progress elsewhere during their time in the infant stage. Progress is more uneven over the four years of the junior phase, with some dips in places and acceleration in Year 6. The standards being achieved by eleven-year-olds are average in all subjects but could be higher if learning was more consistently good. The progress being made by pupils who speak English as an additional language is good because of the good support they receive. Those pupils with special educational needs make generally sound progress; however, some with emotional and behavioural difficulties are making slower progress because their own behaviour gets in the way of fruitful learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are willing and enthusiastic learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour is generally good. The 'playground pals' scheme is a very positive feature in helping pupils feel safe at break-times. One temporary exclusion was made last year that was fully justified.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are harmonious; pupils show respect for one another's views, even when they are different to their own.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance rates are broadly average. Most pupils are punctual to school and this enables the day to get off to a prompt start.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are much better than they were at the time of the previous inspection. This is despite a high staff turnover. Senior managers have provided very good support to new staff and this, together with an effective programme of training and positive implementation of the school’s performance management strategy, is helping raise the quality. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed during this inspection was satisfactory overall with two thirds being of good or better quality. Two unsatisfactory lessons were seen where the ineffective management of pupils with challenging behaviour led to the class being unsettled and not getting enough work done. Teaching is particularly good in Years 1 and 6. The school draws well on specialist support in music and in assisting pupils’ personal and social skills development. The teaching of pupils who learn English as an additional language, including refugees, is good and is a key factor in enabling these pupils to learn successfully. Pupils with special educational needs receive sound support to help them reach their individual targets. Skills of literacy are given good attention, particularly in literacy hours, although more could be done to promote language use in other subjects such as history and geography. The school’s strategy for numeracy is sound overall but mental warm up times are sometimes too slow. Teaching and learning in ICT is good. The practical aspects of a range of subjects are being well promoted and as a result pupils are confident to ‘have a go’ at solving problems. The school has yet to find ways to identify and share the best teaching and learning and to iron out inconsistencies in behaviour management, use of time and the marking of pupils’ work. Pupils are willing and often enthusiastic learners. They work hard, concentrate well and become mature and sensible learners.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. There are significant strengths in the provision for personal, social and health education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Pupils’ needs are assessed at the right time and effective support is given to them that enables most to make sound progress against their individual targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Newcomers to the school have been given effective additional support that has helped them settle in well and make good progress in learning English.
Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Pupils are being encouraged and supported to develop as rounded and responsible future citizens.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. There are good procedures for assessment and very good procedures in place for child protection, improving attendance and ensuring pupils' welfare.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good. The school is forging strong links with parents and has greatly improved communication in the last few months.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The acting headteacher has her finger firmly on the pulse of the school and is pressing ahead with improvements. She is well supported by an effective management team. The role of subject coordinators presents a mixed picture, not least because of the new or temporary appointments. Their influence and impact is not as great as in many schools, but most are now ready to take on more responsibility.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. All legal responsibilities are met fully. Governors apply the principles of best value appropriately to all purchases. They are not yet taking a sufficiently critical or challenging view of pupils' achievements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous and effective in assisting the school make the right improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Staffing levels and learning resources are satisfactory. However staff absences and the high turnover have had a negative impact on school improvements. The school's accommodation is attractive but some classes are cramped for space and noise transference is a problem due to the open-plan nature of rooms and bad acoustics. The school's use of resources is efficient and effective.

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 become mature and responsible. • Teaching is good, there are clear expectations and pupils make progress. • Parents are comfortable to approach the school with questions or problems. • The school is well managed and led. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra-curricular activities. • Homework. • Information on pupils' progress.

Inspectors agree with all the positive views expressed above but disagree with parents on the things identified for improvement. Inspectors judge that the school has a good range of extra-curricular

activities though these are mainly for juniors. Good provision is made for homework and the information provided about pupils' progress is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Grangehurst Primary School provides for a disadvantaged community which is one of the reasons why it is a partner school in the Education Action Zone (EAZ). The number of pupils eligible for free school meals has risen significantly each year. Governors provided inspectors with compelling evidence that shows that well over 20 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals though only 18 per cent actually have free school meals. The proportion of pupils in school with special educational needs is broadly average, though the emotional and behavioural needs of some are very challenging. The school provides for an above average number of pupils who are from homes where little English is spoken and from time to time the school provides for refugee families. Most pupils in school are from white backgrounds but a handful have a different heritage, including Black Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani, Chinese, Norwegian and Serbo-Croat. The school welcomes all pupils and is committed to educational inclusion. It is doing its level best to give its pupils a fair deal.

2 The serious weaknesses flagged by the 1997 inspection, concerning the progress being made by pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, have been eradicated. Pupils' progress over their time at school is good in English, mathematics, science, art and design and physical education (PE) and satisfactory in all other subjects except geography, where it is unsatisfactory. Standards today are better in most subjects than they were in 1997. There is still evidence of pupils of middle and higher ability making uneven progress in the junior phase but pupils' achievements are getting consistently better as a result of managers' concerted action to make improvement. There has been tangible improvement since last September when the new Leadership Group was established and a very positive programme of monitoring and evaluation begun. To some extent staffing issues concerning absence, recruitment and a high turnover have all had a negative impact on the standards pupils are reaching, particularly in the junior phase. The situation is more stable now, staff morale is good and there is a strong sense of unity in school and a shared drive amongst staff to work to make standards higher. The inspection team judges that the school has sound capacity to do this and has set reasonable targets to assist it in reaching its goals.

3 The standards achieved by eleven-year-olds in the 2001 National Curriculum tests were below average in all tested subjects. When compared to similar schools, the standards were average in English and mathematics and above average in science. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. The standards achieved by seven-year-olds in the 2001 National Curriculum tests present a more positive picture. Standards were average in reading and mathematics, and below average in writing. When compared to similar schools standards were well above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. Over the last three years, standards overall have been below the national average for both boys and girls but show a rising trend. When pupils' prior attainment is taken account, most are seen to make satisfactory progress from seven to eleven years. The school's improvement in standards in Year 6 is keeping pace with the national trend, but there is clearly room for improvement in order that the better standards attained at seven are sustained at eleven years. In 2001 the school received an Achievement Award in recognition of the substantial improvement made in pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests. This is a key indicator of its growing effectiveness.

4 The youngest children start school with below average levels of skills, knowledge and understanding, particularly in communication, language and literacy. By the time the children reach the end of the reception year, although making satisfactory progress, their attainment remains below average in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, and creative

development. However, in the areas of personal, social and emotional development, their knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development, most children make good progress and attain average standards by the end of the reception year. Inspection evidence shows standards in Year 2 to be average in all subjects except geography, where they are below average. The standards being achieved by Year 6 are average in all subjects, but could be higher if learning was more consistently good across the junior phase. Boys outnumber girls two to one in the upper junior classes and are spread across the ability range. More boys than girls are in the lower ability sets in English and mathematics. There is no significant variation in the progress they are making or the standards they are achieving within the ability sets. Although standards reach the level expected in geography by Year 6, the standards reached in intervening years are below the level they should be. This is because of patchy coverage of the geography curriculum and because there is no apparent structure to exactly what knowledge, understanding and skills pupils need to build on in geography, and because all pupils are given the same work to do. The result is a hotchpotch of work, some of it good but most of it below the capabilities of pupils. An over use of worksheets is hampering potentially higher achievement.

5 Inspection evidence shows that strengths in teaching basic skills ensure that most pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy during their time at school. Throughout the school there has been positive impact on the achievements of pupils from the successful implementation of both the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies. They have had relatively more impact for the younger pupils at present, as for them this is the normal way to learn English and mathematics. For those in Years 5 and 6 the changes have come on top of already established working patterns and so the impact has been less. The local education authority (LEA) continues to support the school's strategy for teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy. The setting arrangements in mathematics are working successfully; three-way splits that involve pupils being grouped by ability are resulting in well-focused teaching and effective learning. The setting in literacy is similarly successful in Years 1, 2 and 3 but follows a different pattern in the other junior years. Here it has not been possible to arrange sets in Years 4 and 5 due to staffing issues and the three sets in Year 6 comprise the higher attaining pupils in one set but the other two sets include a very wide range of lower and middle attaining pupils. Progress is not as rapid in these two sets and some potentially higher attaining pupils are missing out because of the arrangement. This requires review. The school is tackling the weaknesses identified by monitoring through a well conceived action plan and via a range of strategies, for example, pupils who are a little behind in literacy and numeracy are benefiting from an effective range of additional strategies.

6 Pupils largely develop good reading habits. The increased involvement of parents and through the reading partnership with staff from a local car manufacturer, is proving beneficial to pupils' achievements. The school has spent much time and effort in supporting slow readers but has not yet given the same regular attention to monitoring how well the very capable readers are developing higher-level skills. Pupils' writing skills in English books are clearly improving because of the good attention the school has given to extending these. Pupils are writing imaginatively and creatively at length and are clearly getting enjoyment from so doing. This was well demonstrated by a higher attaining child in Year 1 who in his writing based on the story *Oscar got the Blame* wrote; 'When Oscar went on the roller-coaster with Billy it went riley riley fast...'. This is not consistently the case across the curriculum however. It was apparent from looking at a sample of pupils' books that little high quality written work is being produced in religious education, geography and history, for example. In some older pupils' books work was scruffily presented too. Spellings are practised in most classes but many pupils are still misspelling key vocabulary. Pupils are attentive listeners and follow instructions well. They have less well developed speaking skills. Pupils speak confidently and enthusiastically but what they say is limited by their vocabulary. This is one aspect of literacy that could be better promoted across the curriculum.

7 Pupils' number skills are becoming sharp and most work with reasonable speed and accuracy during the numeracy hours. The strong emphasis given to practical mathematics and problem-solving is paying dividends. There is some good use of numeracy in other subjects, for example in design and technology where exact measurements were required in the design stage of making picture frames. In junior classes well-chosen work is enabling pupils to catch up on aspects of mathematics not learnt securely in the past and from this firmer foundation to take the next step forward with confidence. There is still room for sharpening up the pace and variety of the mental and oral parts of numeracy hours and for improving the way pupils' present work to encourage accuracy. Good practice in setting group targets in literacy and numeracy is helping pupils understand better what they need to do next to improve their work.

8 Pupils are making steady progress in science. The curriculum is well structured and good attention is being paid to promoting the investigative and experimental aspects of the subject. Teachers are providing interesting practical activities for pupils to 'learn by doing' and this motivates good involvement and sustained concentration that is helping to raise standards. The effective use of targets in literacy and numeracy is a feature that could usefully be extended to support improved work in science.

9 Skills in the use and application of information and communication technology (ICT) are developing well. There were several aspects of ICT that gave concern in 1997 and these have all been addressed. The new ICT suite is time-tabled intensively to enable pupils ample time to develop skills and knowledge, and class based computers are put to generally sound use in fostering cross-curricular use of ICT. Pupils achieve good quality work in word processing, graphics and data handling. Older pupils are building good insights into the power of computers to sort, search and interpret data and Year 6 pupils are working creatively in building their own website that will be fully interactive when complete.

10 Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress towards achieving the targets set for them. This is a significant improvement on the unsatisfactory progress seen during the previous inspection. They achieve appropriately, relative to their low starting levels. The systems for identifying the needs of these pupils enable staff to define appropriate targets and support, both in lessons and in small groups outside normal lessons. In some classes, pupils with special educational needs are grouped to work with other pupils of similar ability and receive additional support with their literacy work from well-deployed learning assistants. This is a good strategy that is having a positive impact on accelerating the progress these pupils make and assists the raising of standards. However, some pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are making slower progress because their own behaviour gets in the way of fruitful learning and their attainment suffers as a result.

11 Pupils who have English as an additional language are well supported in the classrooms by teachers and learning support staff. Pupils make good progress in all subjects and by the age of eleven the vast majority can speak English with fluency and read and write at a similar level to other pupils in the school. The school monitors the progress of different ethnic groups very carefully and takes the necessary action to improve progress. Pupils of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage make the best progress of all. The school has identified pupils from mixed heritage backgrounds to be making the least progress and has good plans to address this slight underachievement. This is a dramatic improvement on the unsatisfactory progress seen at the previous inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12 Since the time of the previous inspection the school has worked hard at improving the shortcomings identified in pupils' standards of behaviour. The playground was reported as being a place of tension where instances of bullying were common. Today, the relationships in school are

very good; pupils acknowledge one another's differences but celebrate these as something special. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school and during break-times. The school is racially harmonious and the ethos promotes tolerant and respectful attitudes. Parents identify the way in which the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible as one of its strengths and they are right to do so.

13 Children in the Foundation Stage show good attitudes to work. They work purposefully and with good levels of concentration. The children behave sensibly and follow instructions well. They show good confidence in taking full advantage of the experiences being provided, and are already well on their way to becoming effective learners.

14 Pupils throughout the school have good attitudes to their work and come to school eager to learn. They approach their lessons and activities with enthusiasm. This has a positive effect upon their learning and creates a happy and purposeful atmosphere. In most lessons pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to each other and they offer an enthusiastic response to questions. The design of the building makes this difficult. The open-plan nature of the school results in noise carrying over from one class to another and this can be distracting. Despite this, most pupils concentrate very well and they work hard throughout the day. On some occasions when the teachers talk for an overly long time a few pupils become restless and their attention wanders.

15 Pupils work alongside each other amicably and willingly offer help and encouragement to their classmates. For example, when working at computers in pairs pupils take turns well and share their ideas willingly. As they progress through the school pupils grow in confidence and gain the skills needed to become independent learners. They have a good knowledge of their own learning and make good use of their individual targets in literacy and numeracy. Throughout the school pupils show genuine appreciation for each other and readily applaud success. Pupils and their achievements are highly valued. There are many attractive and stimulating displays of their work throughout the school and pupils feel that this is one of the school's best features.

16 The behaviour of pupils is good overall. The majority behave consistently well in lessons, assemblies and at lunchtimes; this represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils understand and meet the school's expectations well. Praise and reward for good work and behaviour are often used effectively to promote good behaviour, to motivate pupils and to instil pride and confidence. Occasionally in lessons a small number of pupils behave less well. They talk whilst the teacher or others talk and fail to follow instructions and requests sufficiently well. For those pupils presenting the most challenging behaviour the present system for supporting these pupils is sometimes ineffective. This leads to disruptive behaviour that slows the pace of lessons and the learning of all. There has been one exclusion in the past year, which was supported by appropriate procedures and was entirely justified.

17 The relationships amongst all members of the school community are very good. All the adults in school present themselves as a strong supportive community and this is reflected in the pupils. They are polite and helpful and show great respect for each other. Pupils from the diverse ethnic groups are represented in the school play and work together in harmony. Throughout the school many examples are seen of pupils showing deep thought and understanding for other people. Lunchtimes are sociable and pleasant, and outdoor play is happy and orderly. Pupils and parents feel that conflict or bullying is rare and any that occurs is swiftly and effectively dealt with. This area has been well supported by the training of older pupils to act as 'playground pals' who give support to those who have difficulty socialising at break-times. Many aspects of school life and the very good provision for personal and social education promote good relationships very well. This was seen for example, in a Year 3 lesson where pupils greeted their partners politely and paid each other compliments. This is a considerably improved area especially with regard to the relationships and behaviour found at lunchtimes.

18 Pupils' personal development is also very good. Pupils throughout the school are provided with many opportunities to take responsibility and to develop as caring citizens. For example pupils elected to the school council take their roles as class representatives seriously and are aware of the need to express fairly the views of other pupils rather than their own. Pupils are encouraged to voice their own opinions and feelings in lessons and assemblies. In lessons pupils can work well alone but some opportunities to make choices and develop independence are missed. In discussions with inspectors, a group of older pupils expressed a wish for more occasions in school when they can investigate and learn by themselves.

19 Attendance rates are in line with the national average and are satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In the last academic year there were no unauthorised absences. Absences are often due to childhood illnesses but a significant number are connected to holiday taking in term time. For these pupils in particular there is an adverse effect upon their learning and progress. The school is very well supported by the education welfare service should a pupil's attendance gives cause for concern. Most pupils are eager to come to school and they arrive on time; however a small number of pupils sometimes arrive late and miss the start of the school day. Registration is none the less efficient and the day begins promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20 Teaching and learning are much better than they were at the time of the previous inspection. This is despite a high staff turnover. Senior managers have provided very good support to new staff and this, together with an effective programme of training and positive implementation of the school's performance management strategy, is helping to raise the quality of teaching. Teachers feel well supported in school, morale is high and they are committed to raising standards. A positive feature that has supported improvement has been the senior managers' effective monitoring and evaluation of lessons. This has involved critical debriefs to teachers which they have found to be both supportive and developmental. The culture for looking critically at the quality of teaching and learning in order to identify best practice is now set. The school is poised to continue to build on these effective strategies by drawing more people into the process of self review and has now to find ways of sharing more widely the very best features of teaching and learning to be found in school. One weakness identified in the 1997 report, and still in evidence today, is the high level of noise that transfers from one class to another due to the open-plan nature of the school. Steps have been taken to improve this problem and more work on the accommodation is earmarked to take place. The school has a major and costly task ahead to make the improvements required, and as such this is flagged as an issue for improvement. Parents have positive views about the quality of teaching and are right to do so. Some parents raised concerns about homework provision, but they need not worry as the school gives good attention to homework and it is having a beneficial impact on the pupils' learning. The homework club supported by the EAZ partnership is a very positive feature.

21 The quality of teaching in the lessons observed during this inspection was of satisfactory or better quality in 98 per cent, with two-thirds of lessons of good or better quality. Teaching is particularly good in Years 1 and 6 because lessons here are always well planned and executed, behaviour is managed consistently, lessons move on at a brisk pace and these factors result in all pupils irrespective of their needs, abilities, gender or background, making good progress. The school draws well on specialist support in music and in assisting pupils' personal and social skills development. Such contributions are making a very positive contribution to the very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The school's strategies for teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy are proving effective, though further improvement is required in handwriting, spelling and the presentation of work. Skills of literacy are given good attention, particularly in literacy hours, although more could be done to promote language use in other subjects such as history

and geography. The school's strategy for numeracy is sound overall but mental warm up times are sometimes too slow. Teaching and learning in ICT are good. The practical aspects of a range of subjects are being well promoted and as a result pupils are confident to 'have a go' at solving problems.

22 Teaching is satisfactory for four and five-year olds in the reception classes, known as the Foundation Stage. Many children start school with delays in their communication skills and the teachers give good attention to promoting the children's language and literacy skills, as well as their numeracy skills. The staff team work together successfully to enable the children to have worthwhile experiences across the whole of the Early Years curriculum that lead them gently towards the National Curriculum. The good planning includes opportunities for children to investigate, experiment and discuss their experiences and to grow creatively, personally and socially. However, in practice, activities are not always as well matched to children's needs as they could be. The style of teaching is sometimes too formal and this restricts the opportunities for the children to develop their initiative and skills of organisation. Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy their lessons and they are eager to acquire new knowledge. They are taught to become effective learners and show good confidence in taking full advantage of the experiences being provided.

23 Teaching is generally good for pupils aged between five and seven. However, in Year 2 classes a few pupils with challenging behaviour can become quite restless, usually in the afternoon, and this can spoil the flow of the lessons and hamper learning. The ways in which the teachers manage such instances are too variable and in otherwise satisfactory lessons it is one aspect of teaching that requires some improvement. Teachers have good expectations about what the pupils need to learn across the subjects they study. Teaching in infant classes is upbeat and well focused on enabling all pupils to learn at a good rate. Lessons are lively and interesting and the pupils and teachers enjoy their time together. The setting arrangements in literacy and numeracy are working successfully and the three-way split that organises pupils into separate ability groups is having a beneficial impact on pupils' acquisition of skills. Teachers use a good range of techniques to help pupils learn well. Of particular note is the way in which probing questions are helping pupils think deeply and show good reasoning when solving problems. This was quite apparent in a mathematics lesson in Year 1 when higher attaining pupils had to classify a range of toys into four groups. They quickly sorted the jumble of toys into those that were wooden, metal, fabric or plastic and were confident to offer other ways of doing this too, by colour and size for example. They showed a good level of understanding about why it is useful to organise information when presenting their results accurately in a bar chart. Through sharing their different ways of tackling the problem each learned from the other and gained new strategies to help with future work. The teacher asked well-timed questions to ensure that all pupils knew what they were doing and also to encourage them to talk through their strategies and give full explanations. She also made sure that pupils used the correct vocabulary when putting forward their views.

24 The scrutiny of a sample of Year 1 and 2 pupils' work saved since last September, show that this good teaching and learning is commonplace in virtually all subjects. There are examples of high achievement as result of the school's strategies for improving writing. For example, in Year 1 pupils have created some lovely poems about spring, and have retold the story of Cinderella in their own words. In contrast, writing is weak in geography and there are shortfalls in the amount of good quality work completed. The topic folders are rather scruffy and the standards being achieved are below the level expected. Overall, the sum total of the worthwhile experiences being provided and good teaching are resulting in infant age pupils of all abilities achieving well.

25 Teaching is satisfactory for those pupils aged between seven and eleven years. It was more often good or better in the lessons seen during inspection. The sample of pupils' work showed a slightly less positive picture, with dips in quality and some overlap, usually in situations when different teachers had been responsible for the work. This in part reflects the staffing issues that have

faced the school and the extensive use of supply staff at the beginning of term. The quality of work in pupils' books can vary across subjects. In history and geography progress is uneven because pupils are not being taught in sufficient depth about the aspects that are covered. An overuse of worksheets also inhibits pupils' achievements in these subjects. Marking is too variable and only occasionally does it identify where improvement lies. There is little use of the pupils' individual literacy and numeracy targets being used in marking. This is a missed opportunity to help pupils understand what they need to do next to improve their work. Teaching is more often good in English, mathematics, science, ICT, art and design and PE, and satisfactory elsewhere. Teaching is consistently good in Year 6 and pupils' learning accelerates in consequence. Pupils are willing, show enthusiasm and try hard in lessons. Both boys and girls work hard, concentrate well and become mature and sensible learners. Some very good work was completed by higher attaining Year 6 pupils in a literacy hour that focussed on 'octopoems', (poems with no more than eight lines) and demonstrated good learning over the course of the lesson. The teacher firstly showed her own ideas and talked through how the poem should be constructed. She drew well from pupils' various ideas in trying to make her own poem better. The teacher took pains to ensure that a rich vocabulary emerged. In developing their own poems, pupils' work was interesting and creative. One girl wrote,

*'A fireman is scarlet red,
the scorched sun of summer,
for damsels in distress wherever they may be,
a bright willing person,
in his bulging overall,
like a strong table that has no end,
his is a star in London's burning,
a spicy vindaloo.'*

26 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs was found to have serious weaknesses at the last inspection. Reasonable progress has been made in improving the provision for these pupils who now all benefit from sound individual education plans which are generally given suitable attention in the work set in lessons. Additionally, teaching assistants are effective in helping pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, to make progress. Considerable care and thought is given to supporting pupils with physical difficulties. For instance a specially adapted recorder has been purchased to ensure that a pupil with one hand can join her friends in recorder lessons. However, there is a small group of pupils who have emotional and behavioural needs and the provision for them is not as consistent or effective. In a small number of lessons, they were observed to become unsettled and their own work and that of others suffered in consequence. Over the course of the week of inspection it became clear that some teachers are more adept at managing this type of behaviour than others and that inconsistencies arise because there is no whole school approach to managing very challenging behaviour. This is at odds with the good behaviour management systems working well for other pupils and which result in the good behaviour seen from the majority of pupils.

27 The teaching of pupils who learn English as an additional language, including refugees, is good and is a key factor in enabling these pupils to learn successfully. They receive good support from an additional teacher and a support assistant. There is a good focus, both on language and subject content. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils fully understand specific vocabulary. Clear targets for pupils' language development and learning are identified and met. The selection of visual aids is culturally relevant and of good quality. There are very good links with the special needs co-ordinator, which is invaluable where pupils have both language and learning needs. Children who enter the reception classes with very little English receive good support from all staff. There are currently some Croatian refugee children in the reception classes. These children and their parents benefit enormously from very good bilingual support from a member of staff who speaks Serbo-Croat.

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

28 The curriculum is in much better shape than it was at the time of the previous inspection. The school has worked hard to establish policies and schemes of work in all subjects. Planning processes have improved and an appropriate structure of long, medium and short term planning ensures that pupils' skills and knowledge are progressively developed as they proceed through the school. Planning is largely subject based, but the school recognises the need to draw up a plan that shows how subjects can be linked together, and to enable better promotion of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum thereby making the whole curriculum more cohesive and balanced. There is more work to be done in reviewing the content of the geography and history programmes of study and in ensuring that the weekly class timetables enable these subjects to be covered in sufficient depth. Weaknesses in the provision made for pupils with special educational needs and for those who learn English as an additional language have been addressed in full. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. This is an improvement since the last

inspection and it underlines the importance that the school places on supporting and developing rounded and responsible future citizens.

29 The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school's curriculum is satisfactory overall. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, but the formal style of literacy and numeracy lessons is limiting some children's potential. The present range of resources in some areas is not sufficiently well organised to enable children to select and manage their own equipment.

30 Provision for all subjects meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies provide the framework for English and mathematics and nationally recommended schemes have been adopted in other subjects, so that there are systems in place to ensure progression in pupils' learning. The school has given priority to curricular planning for English and mathematics in order to raise attainment. The results of the school's procedures for assessment contribute to curriculum planning for English and mathematics. In literacy and numeracy most year groups are organised in ability bands across the whole year. These setting arrangements are contributing positively to raising standards and need now to be extended across the junior phase. Useful strategies are in place to support pupils who need greater help, and additional policies and initiatives ensure that gifted and talented pupils are given work that provides appropriate challenge.

31 The school provides a broad curriculum, but the minimum allocation of time to some subjects has resulted in a lack of balance in curricular provision. The lack of sufficient time for number in mathematics flagged up in 1997 has been sorted out, but insufficient time is available for pupils to learn in greater depth about geography, history and religious education. The organisation of the school day means that the time for these subjects for pupils in Year 1 and 2 is fragmented and allocated at the end of the day when the children are tired. Insufficient time is allowed to enable older pupils to undertake personal research, practise problem solving skills and powers of reasoning. The strategies for the teaching of literacy are given good attention, particularly in the literacy hours, although more could be done to promote language use in other subjects such as history and geography. At present there is insufficient focus on the key English skill of writing in subjects such as history and geography. The school's strategy for numeracy is sound overall, and pupils satisfactorily use their knowledge of data handling to record information, for example in science and geography. ICT is satisfactorily used as an integral part of the curriculum. The curriculum for music is a particular strength, and pupils benefit from the expertise of visiting specialist teachers.

32 There is satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs. Their needs are assessed at the right time, and the regular support given to them enables them to make sound progress against their individual targets. The specific educational behavioural and emotional needs of the pupils are generally well met, but there are inconsistencies in the management of their behaviour in lessons. The co-ordinator uses effective screening procedures to identify pupils' precise difficulties and needs. These are used to set appropriate, specific short-term and achievable targets in their individual education plans. However, there are few targets to improve pupils' mathematical skills. Pupils' achievements are celebrated by all staff and pupils. Pupils with special educational needs gain in confidence and self-esteem through meeting their targets, and this provides further encouragement to succeed. Regular reviews and effective record keeping show that pupils make sound progress through small steps from a low starting point. Careful consideration is given to the most effective deployment of support staff to meet individual needs and this is reviewed and revised regularly.

33 There is good provision for pupils who learn English as an additional language. Newcomers to the school are given effective additional support, which has helped them settle in well and make rapid progress in learning English. There is a detailed register of how far pupils have progressed in acquiring English, which is very helpful to all staff. Pupils' language needs are assessed regularly and

they receive work and support well matched to their needs. Pupils' mother tongues are celebrated and used in many lessons. For instance, a Year 6 pupil was proud and pleased to write the Cantonese symbols and words for wind (fum) and water (soy) during a literacy lesson on Haiku poetry.

34 Provision for equality of opportunity and access for all pupils is very good. The school is particularly effective at identifying various groups of pupils and then ensuring that learning meets their needs. All pupils are valued and differences are celebrated. Boys and girls work well together and achieve similar results. There is very good tracking and analysis of data to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils. There is good representation of local community groups on the staff and the governing body. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who have special educational needs benefit considerably from early identification and additional support. The school indicates 'gifted and talented' pupils in all subjects and ensures work set meets pupils' needs. This is very effective as test results in English and mathematics show. Talented musicians are encouraged and identified. For instance, one young pupil with a beautiful singing voice confidently sang a solo to a large audience in a community project organised by the local secondary school. Apparently, there was not 'a dry eye in the house'.

35 Although some parents do not feel that the school provides an interesting range of extra activities, the inspection found that provision for extra-curricular activities is good. A wide range of activities are open to pupils in Year 3 to 6 and these include basketball, football, art and music, the homework club, and first aid. The popularity of these activities is evidenced by the enthusiastic take-up of places, particularly the participation in the school choir. Younger pupils of the school have the opportunity to become recorder players and to be part of a younger school choir for special events. Links with the community are good and provide additional learning opportunities and facilities available to pupils. The school's involvement in the wider community also provides good opportunities for pupils' personal and social development. Pupils undertake visits, for example to a local day care centre, and visiting speakers, representing many aspects and cultural diversity, come into school and talk to the pupils.

36 As part of the Coventry EAZ, the school benefits from many of its initiatives. The homework club is a good example of this. Strong links have been established with well known companies who provide support for the building of pupils' reading skills and self-esteem and who also provide practical help and contribute towards fundraising. The school has very good relationships with partner institutions. The local secondary school provides extra-curricular links through art, drama and music. There are close links with the main receiving school to ensure a smooth transition for pupils in Year 6 and curriculum and assessment links have been firmly established, ensuring a smooth transference of necessary information. A playgroup operates on site, and there are useful planning meetings and systems for the induction of younger pupils to the school. The school also participates regularly in sporting events with other schools. There are further well-established relationships with a local school for pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils from this school regularly visit so that they can take part in art and design lessons, and this provides a valuable experience for Grangehurst pupils, and contributes further to their personal and social education.

37 The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. There is an appropriate policy to support sex education and this, with drugs education, and learning about a healthy lifestyle, is successfully developed through the personal and social education programme and links with other subjects such as science. Pupils' awareness of a healthy lifestyle is also enhanced through initiatives such as the 'Healthy Schools' scheme.

38 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Pupils are being encouraged and supported to develop as rounded and responsible future citizens. There is very good provision for spiritual development. Throughout the week, in assemblies

and in PSE¹ and other lessons, pupils are encouraged to explore the intangible qualities that characterise us as human beings, love, compassion and pity for example, and to explore the reasons for the evil that is in the world. The school is embracing the impressive ‘Sathya Sai’ programme of personal development in all age groups and another programme called ‘R Time’, in Year 3. This latter initiative has been established with support from the EAZ. Through these programmes, pupils are being offered very good opportunities to reflect on their lives. The opinions of all pupils in discussions are valued and they are unselfconsciously expressed in most instances. Some profound thoughts are voiced, for example by a boy in Year 5 who, after hearing the story of ‘The Good Samaritan’, said that, “God and Jesus are neighbours in our hearts.” Assemblies too offer good opportunities for reflection although, when the assembly is in a classroom, noise from adjacent areas sometimes disturbs the peace. Some year-groups wisely join together for their assembly and this solves the problem. In whole-school assemblies, times of prayer and reflection are valued and honoured by all. Following the news of an accident to a past pupil, the headteacher very sensitively reassured the school that all would be well as she lit a candle and said a moving prayer asking for the full recovery of the boy. There was a feeling of genuine concern from the assembly, silently expressed.

39 There is good provision for pupils’ moral development. The school rules are displayed in all classes and the rewards and sanctions are clearly understood. A ‘Good Book’ assembly every week celebrates the pupils’ achievements in work, behaviour and attitudes. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong actions because they are regularly discussed in assemblies and in lessons. In Year 1, pupils consider the notion that, to have friends, we must be friendly ourselves. In an assembly taken by the local minister, the plight of people in Mozambique who do not have access to clean water was explored and how an inexpensive filtration plant would solve the problem. The school regularly contributes to a variety of charities so that the positive aspects of helping others less fortunate than ourselves is reinforced. The headteacher actively supports pupils who show initiative in this area, for example, a boy who proposed holding a ‘Blue Peter Bring-and-Buy Sale’ last Christmas was given good support to do so.

40 Provision for pupils’ social development has improved and is now very good. Within classes and around the school, relationships are very good and pupils show deep respect for the views and beliefs of others. They are friendly and open with visitors. School assemblies take place in a warm atmosphere with a real sense that the participants care for each other. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities around the school or in their classroom. Some prepare the hall for assembly and announce the hymns that will be sung. Others post the weather news each day (using the satellite picture downloaded from the Internet) or move the ‘sandwich trolleys’ to their allotted place. Year 6 pupils take turns to be administrative support assistants and undertake reception duties weekly. ‘Playground Pals’ are trained to resolve problems that occur outside the classroom and the school council raises concerns that are brought to them by other pupils. As a result of their deliberations, indoor games have been bought so that pupils have something to interest them during wet playtimes. Outside lessons, there are many opportunities to socialise – in the clubs that operate after school, during visits in connection with lessons and when special events are held, for example, musical performances with other schools, with Grangehurst acting as the host school.

41 There is very good provision for pupils’ cultural development and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The multicultural dimension of the school is well promoted. The first thing the visitor sees in the foyer is a colourful display showing smiling faces saying “Welcome” in the many different language of pupils in the school. The school is racially tolerant and harmonious and the school does much to promote this. Pupils are well prepared to take their place in a multicultural society; they mark the festivals of a variety of religions and learn about the values and beliefs of the major world faiths in religious education lessons. During a Celebration of Cultures Day, various

¹ Personal and social education

representatives from the local community, including parents, talk about their traditions. Pupils are introduced to a wide range of texts from different cultures in their literacy lessons and, through music and art and design, they are helped to appreciate the works of many famous composers and artists. Traditional British culture is promoted through work in history and by continuing ancient traditions such as Country dancing, the Easter Bonnet Parade or the celebration of Harvest with the distribution of gifts to the elderly. Local culture is particularly well promoted with work in religious education, history and geography emphasising the life of people in Coventry now and in the past. This is brought alive for pupils by visits to such places as the Cathedral, a Hindu temple and the local transport museum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42 The school has given good attention to improving a range of health, welfare and safety procedures since its previous inspection. The identification of pupils' educational and social needs is made at an early stage and effective support established. Those pupils who join the school at different times are well integrated. This is particularly the case for refugee children in the reception class who have settled very well due to the school's sensitive approach and highly effective support arrangements. The support given to pupils who learn English as an additional language is no longer an unsatisfactory feature. The school makes good provision for these pupils who are making good progress as a result. The school provides a safe, caring and attractive environment that has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

43 The school has very good arrangements for the care and protection of its pupils. Pupils are well known and well supported by the very good relationships that exist throughout the school. Health and safety procedures are very good and these are well matched by careful daily practice. In particular the school raises pupils' awareness of the need to take care of themselves and others very well. For example in a Year 3 English lesson, pupils discussed and then composed recipes for a happy and safe playtime. Road safety and first aid skills are also promoted well in lessons and through an extra-curricular club. The arrangements for child protection are also very good. There is a clear policy that provides very effective guidance for all adults in school. Regular meetings between teaching staff, classroom assistants and midday supervisors ensure all in school have a good level of knowledge and awareness.

44 In the previous inspection the procedures and use of assessment were identified as being weak in all subjects. The school has made considerable improvement since the last inspection in the areas of assessment and recording. It has drawn up and implemented a useful assessment policy which is currently under review. This is so that it reflects the changes in the school's curriculum through the adoption of new schemes of work, target setting and the analysis of data. National tests are supplemented with further standardised tests in each year group and the results are used effectively to track individual and group progress. In addition to this, opportunities for regular assessment are written into plans for literacy, and half-termly assessment is made of pupils' progress in mathematics, science and religious education. Other assessments are used regularly to monitor pupils' progress in areas such as reading and spelling. The results form a clear picture of what pupils have gained in knowledge and understanding. Early identification of pupils whose performance is giving cause for concern ensures that appropriate support is made available. Efficient procedures for assessment across the foundation subjects have yet to be fully developed.

45 The use the school derives from its assessment procedures is satisfactory. The school uses assessment data effectively at a strategic level. The systematic analysis of the results of formal testing highlights the various issues for the school. The information gained informs the organisation of ability groups for English and mathematics, the tracking of individual achievement, and the achievements of different groups of pupils and setting school and group targets. This helps to ensure

that teachers' planning meets the needs of all groups of pupils in English and mathematics. It helps to identify pupils with learning difficulties as well as higher attaining, gifted and talented pupils. It also contributes to flexibility in grouping to allow for pupils meeting their targets and moving on quickly. However, the results of assessment in English are not yet effectively linked to other subjects, which would contribute to pupils practising and using the skills they learn. The results of assessment in science, while contributing to teachers' planning of the next stage of the curriculum and learning, are not yet used to set appropriate short term targets, and consistently ensure that work is matched to pupils' needs. In the foundation subjects, such as history and geography, assessment is not sufficiently informative and detailed to compile accurate records and to show pupils how they need to improve their work. In order to help teachers reach an agreement on different levels of attainment, subject co-ordinators are now developing portfolios of assessed work for their subjects.

46 The procedures to monitor pupils' academic progress are good. The school now has a good picture of how individual and groups of pupils are performing in English and mathematics as data gathered from assessment is thoroughly analysed and the results clearly recorded. The detail of monitoring is well exemplified by the clear recording of an overview of weaknesses in different aspects of reading and mathematics. Records are used to enable the school to track progress as pupils move through the school, and these are efficiently maintained. The school's systems involve a range of useful recording methods and enable staff to monitor the progress of individuals and of different groups of pupils on a regular basis. This means that no pupil's needs are overlooked when planning future work, in English and mathematics particularly. There are also efficient systems for the transfer of information between classes and as pupils move to the next school. A weakness lies with the pupils' individual records of achievement. Although they contain work chosen by the pupils, there are some untidy samples of work which are not annotated and which provide little useful information on what pupils have achieved.

47 The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Pupils are all well known and very well supported by the very good relationships that exist. Records are maintained that allow the school to monitor each pupil's personal progress well and to clearly identify concerns. Teachers, classroom assistants and midday supervisors are all closely involved in this process. The very good provision for pupils' personal, health and social education adds considerably to this aspect of the schools work.

48 The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. Behaviour is closely monitored and detailed records are maintained with regard to behaviour across the school and for individuals. This information has been used effectively to improve whole school behaviour. There is a well-structured system of rewards and clear rules that are well understood. The emphasis placed upon praise is effective in promoting good behaviour and in boosting self-confidence and pride in all pupils. There is some inconsistency in the application of the school's policy and this was also so at the time of the last inspection. At present the school does not always offer effective support for teachers coping with pupils who present very challenging behaviour. Consequently a few lessons are adversely affected by unacceptable behaviour. There are good procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. Incidents are rare and pupils are involved in appropriate discussion in personal and social education lessons.

49 The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. The school meets with statutory requirements and the administrative arrangements are very efficient. Attendance is very closely monitored and swift action taken to investigate absences. Parents are provided with clear messages about attendance issues and good attendance rewards are effective in maintaining and improving attendance levels. This area is well supported by the business community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50 Parents are very appreciative of all that the school provides and in particular the many improvements that have taken place during the present academic year. They are especially pleased with the happiness of their children when at school, the high expectations that the school has for their children and the progress that they make. Parents feel that the school is very approachable and that the school responds well to any concerns that they might have. A small number of parents are unhappy with the amount of homework provided and the range of activities offered outside lessons. Some parents also felt that they were not well enough informed about how their child is getting on. The inspection findings support all of the positive views held by parents. There is a good variety of extra-curricular clubs but these are in the main available to pupils in the juniors. Parents would like younger pupils to have a wider choice and the school is aware of this. Parents should be reassured that the amount and type of homework provided is good and the information that parents receive about their child's work and progress is good.

51 The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is very good. There is a good relationship between the school and the parents. Parents are welcomed into the school and they find the teachers and other staff to be responsive and supportive. There are very good opportunities for parents to take part in school life and to be effective partners in their children's education. They are invited to special events, open lessons and curriculum workshops all of which give them insight into the work that their children are doing. Parents also have opportunities to attend courses that help them to understand their children and how they may best help them to learn at home.

52 The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. A number of parents are able to offer help in the classrooms, with extra-curricular clubs or with other school events and this has a positive impact upon pupils' learning. Other parents offer their help by supporting the Parent Teacher Association that provides the school with welcome additional resources. The school is appreciative of the good support it receives from parents and would like to involve them even more in the life and development of the school.

53 The quality of the information provided for parents is very good overall. The school brochure, governors' report and letters are very well written and informative. The excellent school newsletter keeps parents well informed about the life of the school, about their children's successes and the work that they will be doing. There are a variety of clear and informative booklets about different aspects of life in school and how parents might support reading and mathematics at home. Information about pupils' work and progress is conveyed in good quality written reports and with regular consultation events. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Written reports offer clear information about the work that pupils have done and their achievements. Areas of difficulty are clearly identified and targets for the future are identified.

54 The contribution that parents make to their children's learning at home and at school is good. Homework is well supported throughout the school and this has a beneficial effect upon pupils' learning. Parents are well informed about the purpose and requirements of homework and they make good use of home-school books to indicate their involvement in work that has been done at home. Parents feel that the school has high expectations for their children and most parents are clearly committed to supporting this. However the amount of holiday taking in term time shows that not all parents share this same commitment.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55 Although 'strong and effective leadership' was provided by the headteacher, the 1997 inspection nevertheless found serious weaknesses in the standards and quality of education provided by the school. Since then there has been a very high turnover of staff: for example eight of the current

teachers joined the school at the start of this academic year. This includes both deputy headteachers. The acting headteacher was until September the school's deputy, her appointment following the secondment of the headteacher to a post within the local education authority.

56 Given this challenging scenario, the acting headteacher has made very good progress in bringing about improvements in a very short time. She has not done this alone, and is the first to acknowledge the support she receives from a committed governing body, very supportive deputy heads and the senior management team. It is, however, her leadership which has been instrumental in creating a staff who, whatever their length of time in school, are most positive about the ongoing tasks of consolidation and improvement. This unity of purpose is shared by everyone and extends to the pupils, who are rightly proud of their school. Morale is high. There is no sense of caretaker management, and over the last six months several initiatives have been started, some of which, like the system for tracking individual pupil progress, will not be fully effective for some time.

57 The acting headteacher works closely with the two deputy heads who form the Leadership Group, and the senior management team that includes the special needs co-ordinator and assessment co-ordinator. The minutes of meetings show good debate and discussion. Ideas are pooled and the decisions that arise are corporate and shared with the rest of the school. Communication is recognised as central to the school's development and is very effective in keeping everyone informed and involved, something that staff have not seen so positively in the past. The management team possesses a good degree of insight. They particularly value the open culture fostered in the school and the sense of inclusion. While leading from the front they are nevertheless aware of the importance of delegation and the need for curriculum leaders, for example, to take responsibility for raising standards in their own subject. Currently the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is mainly carried out by the leadership group, and is effective in disseminating good practice and offering points for improvement. They recognise that the next step is to widen the process of self-critical review by drawing more people into the process.

58 The special educational needs co-ordinator is experienced, caring and hard working and understands pupils' individual needs well. She has spearheaded many new incentives since the previous inspection. These improvements have resulted in improved record keeping and identification systems. The co-ordinator sensitively and competently organises the classroom support and liaises successfully with the teachers. There are regular, detailed reports to the governing body.

59 Provision for pupils with English as an additional language has improved dramatically because of the hard work and dedication of all staff. The current co-ordinator has only been in post for two terms but has made considerable improvements to enhance the provision in a very short space of time. There is a total commitment to welcome all pupils, whatever their colour, creed or background into the life of the school. The school values and celebrates its cultural diversity through a wide range of books and artefacts, reflecting different lifestyles and beliefs and by sharing important celebration such as Christmas, Diwali, Eid, Chinese New Year and Hanukkah.

60 Staff development is also part of the school's culture: for example, most of the current teachers have attended a five-day mathematics course as well as one on writing, thus supporting the main focus for curriculum development. The newly qualified teacher on the staff is mentored by one of the deputy heads and has received a lot of support, both within the school and from outside agencies. With so many teachers new to the school the training day at the beginning of September was largely used to acquaint them with the school's procedures and answer their questions, and each is paired with an individual mentor on the staff.

61 The acting headteacher has a good grasp of where the school is now and what it needs to do to become still more effective. The first focus is rightly on improving standards, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and there is evidence that this is happening. The

problems caused by the nature of the building, which result in noise and distraction for pupils in some of their lessons, are under consideration, although solutions are likely to be difficult and expensive. Foundation subjects, especially geography and history are identified for review, as is the overall timetable, to ensure that pupils receive both depth and breadth in their education. The school's improvement plan is detailed and appropriate, although the criteria for success are not always clear and measurable.

62 The governors are supportive and involved, and the acting headteacher and chair of governors have a good working relationship. Governors are in school frequently, sometimes in classrooms, and feel part of the school team. It is very much *their* school, and they believe in it and want it to do well. They are beginning to form a clear view of standards, both year on year in their own school and in comparison with others. They make good use of the local cluster of schools for support and training. The appointed governors have set the acting headteacher's targets to take account of raising standards and to develop management aspects in line with statutory requirements. However in some areas there is less clarity: for example they are not sure of pupils' progress over time and what this tells them about standards in the school. There is a feeling that staffing problems, which have clearly been a major worry, are now more or less sorted out, even though two of the three members of the school's leadership group are in temporary posts. Governors are fulfilling all of their legal requirements.

63 Funds available to the school are spent wisely and in the interests of all pupils. Finances are carefully matched to priorities and both governors and the acting headteacher monitor the budget carefully. Additional funding, for example from the EAZ, is well targeted to support teaching and learning, a good example being enhancing the outdoor area for the Foundation Stage. The carry-forward of funds is above government guidelines but is earmarked for appropriate initiatives. The school is fortunate to have an experienced finance officer who maintains highly effective oversight of spending. Principles of best value are astutely applied when making purchases, but are not yet used to evaluate the contribution of spending to raising standards.

64 The accommodation is spacious and well cared for by pupils and staff, including the buildings manager and cleaning staff. The entrance to the school is both impressive and welcoming, and the administrative staff give a friendly reception to visitors. While there are positive aspects such as the dedicated hall for physical education and a separate music room, overall the accommodation is judged to be unsatisfactory. This is because despite the school's best efforts with acoustic materials the housing of two classes in each bay means that the natural noise from lessons interferes with the learning of neighbouring pupils. Steps have been taken to improve this problem and more work on the accommodation is earmarked to take place. The school has set aside a considerable sum of money to assist with refurbishments, although it is unlikely that this will fully solve the problems.

65 There is a sufficient number of teaching and support staff. The latter make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those with special educational needs, and are valued by the school. Learning resources are generally satisfactory. In RE they are good, but in the Foundation Stage, while sufficient, they are sometimes on their last legs and need replacing sooner rather than later.

66 The school does a very good job of reflecting its aims and values in its work. The whole staff, teaching and non-teaching, work together as a team in the interests of the pupils. Because of this, and the leadership of senior staff, the school is in a good position to build on the improvements already made. Teaching is effective and pupils generally make sound progress and achieve satisfactory standards: as a result the school gives sound value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67 In their work to further improve the quality of education at the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

Continue to press ahead with raising academic standards in English, mathematics and science and particularly geography by:

- Providing guidance to teachers to support improvement in pupils' handwriting, spelling and presentation of work;
- Finding ways to extend pupils' speaking, listening and writing skills across the curriculum;
- Reviewing the organisation of junior learning sets in literacy;
- Extending opportunities for the youngest children to think for themselves, access their own resources and take initiative;
- Sharpening up the pace and variety of the mental and oral parts of numeracy hours and improving the way pupils' present work to encourage accuracy;
- Setting targets to support pupils' learning in science;
- Identifying exactly what knowledge, understanding and skills pupils need to build on in geography and ensuring that there is sufficient time for these to be developed;
- Reviewing the curriculum to ensure that time is available for pupils to learn in sufficient depth about geography, history and religious education and to have more time to develop enquiry skills, research information and extend their powers of reasoning;
- Identifying and sharing the features of the best teaching and learning to be found in school;
- Drawing more people into the process of self-critical review;
- Making more explicit the success criteria by which improvement in raising standards will be monitored and evaluated and identifying this clearly in the school's improvement plan.

(Paragraphs: 3 - 8, 20, 21, 25, 28, 30, 31, 57, 74, 75, 87, 90, 93, 97, 98, 100, 103, 106, 107, 109, 114, 127, 133, 134, 153, 156)

In their action plan governors should also give attention to the following minor issues:

Seek to improve the weaker aspects of the accommodation which is cramped in places and where noise transference mars the otherwise good quality learning environment.

(Paragraphs: 20, 61, 64, 121, 145)

Tighten up on the management of behaviour and making more consistent the positive approaches required when dealing with those pupils who have challenging behaviour.

(Paragraphs: 10, 16, 26, 32, 48, 112, 137, 143)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

93

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

35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	11	50	27	2	0	0
Percentage	3	12	54	29	2	0	0

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

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)	0	412
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	85

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	95

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	42

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	40	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	33	36
	Girls	17	18	16
	Total	51	51	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (83)	81 (86)	83 (94)
	National	85 (84)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	33	36	39
	Girls	18	18	19
	Total	51	54	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (83)	86 (91)	92 (94)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	34	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	20	29
	Girls	19	18	23
	Total	43	38	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (75)	61 (58)	84 (88)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	20	25
	Girls	20	18	23
	Total	43	38	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (66)	61 (58)	77 (77)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	0
Black – other	0
Indian	39
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	1
White	341
Any other minority ethnic group	25

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)	17.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	225

FTE means full-time equivalent

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	832,655
Total expenditure	776,326
Expenditure per pupil	1,857
Balance brought forward from previous year	23,190

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	340
Number of questionnaires returned	121

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	30	2	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	45	1	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	46	6	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	53	13	2	2
The teaching is good.	46	48	3	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	40	15	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	35	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	35	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	43	15	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	49	47	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	49	5	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	41	13	4	4

NB: Rows may not total 100 per cent due to rounding.

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

68 Since the previous inspection, there has been a change in the education provided for nursery and reception children nationally. The Foundation Stage curriculum, (for children in the nursery and reception classes), replaces the previous curriculum for the early years.

69 The environment for children in the Foundation Stage is warm and welcoming. Children are admitted to the reception classes in the year in which they are five. Mostly they transfer from the playgroup housed in the school building as well as other early years settings in the local area. A gradual introduction, together with helpful information given to parents, ensures children make a good start. At the time of the inspection there were 60 children in the two reception classes, all attending full time.

70 Children enter the school with below average attainment overall and some with well below average attainment in language and communication and mathematics. By the time children reach the end of the reception year, although making satisfactory progress, their attainment remains below average in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, and creative development. However, in the areas of personal, social, and emotional development, their knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development, children make good progress and attain average standards by the end of the reception year. Children who have special educational needs receive sound support during their time in the reception classes and make satisfactory progress. Children who receive support for their spoken English make good progress and achieve well. Most parents bring their children to school on time and are confident that their children are happy and cared for well.

71 The curriculum provided for these children is satisfactory and covers all the required areas of learning. Most aspects are covered throughout the day, but the reception timetable is constrained by the daily literacy and numeracy lessons which are quite formal in style. As children have not yet achieved the expected levels, these lessons are not appropriate for all children in the reception classes. These sessions are too long and activities are not sufficiently well organised and resourced and some children do not make the progress they could. Curriculum planning is newly established but provides appropriately for each stage of children's learning. Aspects of the curriculum, where the children select activities, are well planned. This is a good feature. However, the resources that are available to support many of these activities are insufficient in quality, quantity and appropriateness. The school has identified the need to extend the mathematical and outdoor resources.

72 Assessment procedures are satisfactory and improving. They include an early assessment of children as they enter the school and scores are used to group the children into three ability groups for communication, language and literacy and mathematics. Observations of children are not a regular feature, particularly by support staff, but the progress of all children is closely monitored and recorded.

73 The leadership in the Foundation Stage is sound with many new initiatives being tried and evaluated. This stage in children's education is treated as being of equal importance to subsequent stages in the school and staff are aware of the recent changes. The co-ordinator has sought information and encouraged outside support in order to improve the curriculum. She is aware of the need to relate assessment closely to the sequence of levels within the Early Learning Goals², known

² The standards that most children should reach by the end of the reception year.

as 'stepping stones'. Where teachers have completed the necessary training in the new curriculum they are developing their expertise well.

74 The quality of teaching in all areas of learning is at least satisfactory, and sometimes good. Teachers and support staff talk to children during their activities, placing good emphasis on developing their speaking and listening skills. Relationships are very good throughout the Foundation Stage, which is reflected in the good progress children make in their personal, social and emotional development. Support staff provide a sound level of help to teachers throughout the reception classes. They are involved at each stage of the planning process and play individual roles in an effective team. Where teaching is too prescribed or not sufficiently organised or where sessions are too long, learning slows. Children's interest wanes and so does their rate of learning. Where teaching is more successful, work is provided at the right level, giving children the opportunity to make choices in a planned way, stimulating their imaginative and creative development and establishing a good level of understanding of the world around them. In some areas of learning, lessons are not effective enough to enable the children to learn through appropriate resources or stimulating, structured experiences. For example, in the creative area, tasks are sometimes too fixed, limiting the children's choice and creativity, or in mathematics a chosen resource is provided at an inappropriate level, resulting in the children making limited gains and the objectives for learning not being met.

75 The present range of resources in some areas is not sufficiently well organised to enable children to select and manage their own equipment. The fenced outside area for all children offers good potential for imaginative and adventurous play. This area is to be developed in the near future. Resources in the reception classes are sufficient overall but need to be extended and updated to provide appropriately for all areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

76 Most children enter the reception classes with below average skills in personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress, however, so that by the time they reach Year 1, they achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. Although older children do not have enough opportunities to develop their independence in the organisation of their work, and in their selection of resources in some lessons, they are confident in understanding their daily routines. The working environment is calm and purposeful. Teaching is good in some aspects but is satisfactory overall.

77 In both classes, the children feel safe and secure and display a good level of trust in the way they relate to the staff, confidently leaving their parents and carers, showing enthusiasm and interest in the day ahead. They have a good sense of belonging and share their experiences with others, particularly at the start of the day when they are anxious to tell their 'news'. They behave very well and are clear about what is expected of them throughout the sessions. Children mostly concentrate and work hard, particularly when the activities are relevant, interesting and not over-long.

Communication, language and literacy

78 Although standards are below average by the end of the reception year, children make satisfactory progress and teaching is sound in this area of learning. Children make good progress in the development of their speaking and listening skills from a level that is below, and for some children, well below average. For many, their weak communication skills inhibit the progress made in other areas of learning initially. In responding to national policy to establish the National Literacy Strategy in reception classes the school has not given sufficient attention to the learning needs of the children and to adapting the guidance accordingly. The emphasis on a full 'literacy hour' for all children in the reception classes is inappropriate, the structure of the lessons and too formal a style of teaching is inhibiting learning, as many of the children are not ready to sit still for an hour and learn

in this way. Children with special educational needs make sound progress and those who speak a language other than English at home, make good progress through the good level of support provided specifically for them. Children's progress in this area is measured through the following three aspects:

- *Speaking and listening*

In the reception classes, children enjoy listening to stories. They talk and listen to each other in their activities, especially as they 'pretend' in the café. Support staff are involved in these activities and encourage children's language. This is a good feature, and in particular for those children for whom English is an additional language. Teachers make good use of puppets to focus children's interest and develop their language.

- *Reading*

Although children make satisfactory progress, many have still to reach the expected goals for their age in this area of learning. Children enjoy stories such as 'Dippy Drippy Diners' and some understand an alliteration as in 'jolly jumping jelly beans'. By the end of the reception year, through many interesting and fun games, many children know their initial sounds but are still learning to use them in the recognition of words. There is a library area and children borrow classroom books on a regular basis. While this encourages them to enjoy books, many books are well worn. Some children know the books they like most and some recognise words that are familiar.

- *Writing*

There are good opportunities provided in both reception classes for children to develop their writing skills. Children are able to practise their writing in a variety of ways, for example, as they write their names, practise in the writing areas and when note-taking in role-play activities. They draw letter shapes using paint and write in trays of salt. All children have writing materials that are within easy reach and many children make good attempts at writing their own name.

Mathematical development

79 By the time they reach Year 1, many children have still to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning, although they make sound progress overall. Teaching is satisfactory. The emphasis on the numeracy style lesson is inappropriate for many children, as they are not yet ready for such a structured session. Numeracy lessons are too long and interest wanes as time passes resulting in the level of children's learning not being high enough. The school has yet to decide how to introduce the numeracy hour with appropriate adaptation to best suit the learning needs of the children.

80 Children sort out number problems when they count during the singing of number rhymes. More able children recognise numbers to ten and some beyond and identify one more and one less using a number line. Other children accurately count the number of beats on a drum but most are unable to represent 'one more' using a number fan. There is little apparatus to practise sorting and counting and this affects the progress of these children.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

81 Children come to school with a range of ideas of the world around them. From this beginning, as a result of effective teaching, children make good progress and reach average levels by the end of the reception year.

82 In the reception classes children plant cress and observe the seeds as they grow. They have an understanding of the life cycle of a butterfly as an introduction to their scientific understanding of the

world. They learn about the environment during their visits and care for a hamster call 'Nipper'. Children are aware of change as they observe jelly and talk about what is seen and what they are doing. By the time they transfer to Year 1, they are well prepared for studies in science.

83 Children purposefully construct buildings using building blocks, having a good idea of what they want to achieve. All children use the computer and operate the 'mouse', some with understanding and accuracy. Children talk about and make pizzas, enjoying the finished result. These experiences prepare them well for design and technology, and ICT.

84 In religious education children have opportunities to share events and 'special times', such as Chinese New Year. There is a good emphasis on developing children's awareness of other cultures and beliefs.

Physical development

85 Children's progress is good in their physical development. By the end of the reception year, as a result of sound teaching, children have reached the levels expected for their age.

86 All the children have opportunities to practise their skills as they climb and balance in the hall. They make good progress so that by the end of the reception year, they can use equipment in the hall with appropriate control and confidence. The outside area, although not developed, provides some experiences in physical development and there are some opportunities to use bikes and cars although these are few in number. Children practise their balls skills, catching a ball skilfully as they stand in a circle. Outside, they balance by walking along a rope, demonstrating a good level of control. All the children use tools, such as scissors, with care and developing control.

Creative development

87 The children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning. By the end of the reception year however, they do not reach many of the Early Learning Goals. Many 'art' activities are too directed, limiting opportunities for children to develop their creativity and make choices, for example in the choice and size of paper, although staff are beginning to offer this. At the present time they have too few opportunities to choose from a wide variety of materials, to make models, draw and paint and to try different colours independently. However, they make good progress in other aspects of this area when working in supervised groups with staff.

88 The children's musical development is satisfactory. They make good progress in singing songs and rhymes during the day in the reception rooms and use the studio to experience and enjoy musical instruments. Children play instruments in organised groups, but musical instruments are not sufficiently available for them to experiment with in the classrooms. Children use their imaginations in their role-play and when taking part in stories with their class groups.

ENGLISH

89 Standards in English at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are judged to be average and have improved significantly since the last inspection when they were judged to be below average. National Curriculum test results have risen over the past four years at a similar rate to the national trend but with a decline in 2001, when standards of attainment were below average. This dip in standards was not unexpected by the school and was due to the nature of the cohort. The school narrowly missed its targets for 2001. There has been no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls over the last three years when set against the national picture, however, boys are performing slightly better than girls in school. The school's targets for pupils' performance in the 2002 National Curriculum

tests are reasonable and should meet the national average. The school is judged to have sound capacity to reach its targets in English.

90 Pupils' progress varies between year groups and classes but overall pupils make good progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Pupils make particularly good progress in Years 1 and 6. Attainment in reading is better than in writing and the school has recently put many initiatives in place to improve pupils' writing skills. These are beginning to pay dividends in the quality of work emerging. Nevertheless, more improvement is required. Spelling is weak in both the infants and the juniors, as at the time of the previous inspection. The teaching of handwriting is inconsistent and presentation is not always as good as it could be. The school has not yet given sufficient attention to promoting writing across the curriculum.

91 Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in literacy in relation to targets in their individual education plans, as they receive good additional support and, in most cases, specially adapted work which meets their needs. Pupils who learn English as an additional language achieve well and in many classes are in the higher sets for literacy.

92 By the ages of seven and eleven, pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is average and, although progress varies between year groups, pupils make good progress overall. In the Year 1 classes, pupils made good progress in developing and extending their speaking and listening skills during a discussion about the text 'Oscar got the blame'. All pupils, including those who learn English as an additional language, confidently and clearly expressed their views about Oscar. Teachers skilfully encouraged reluctant and hesitant pupils to communicate. Year 2 higher attaining pupils coherently explained the poem 'The Shell Spell' to an inspector and eagerly articulate interesting adjectives such as 'incredibly hazy' to describe 'Neptune's Underground Kingdom'.

93 Pupils' confidence in speaking in front of the whole class is consolidated and developed further in junior classes where there are opportunities to give oral explanations of their learning in subjects such as history. There is scope for this good practice to be extended to all subjects to ensure that all pupils fully comprehend subject specific vocabulary. Year 6 pupils pay close attention to what the teachers are saying and reply to questions with thoughtful comment and detail. These older pupils are encouraged to debate and discuss their learning in many subjects. For instance, higher attaining Year 6 pupils, in a literacy lesson, discussed and read their 'Octopoems' with aplomb. However, in some classes throughout the school, teachers do not target questions to pupils of varying ability to check their comprehension. Drama is not used sufficiently to encourage speaking skills. Confident teachers use a rich and wide vocabulary to promote the pupils' interest in new words and also insist that pupils answer questions in full sentences. Some teachers accept single word responses to questions and pupils' speaking skills are then not extended. Teachers do not always check that pupils have understood specific vocabulary in lessons, and this results in confusion for a few pupils.

94 Pupils' attainment in reading by the age of seven is average and pupils make good progress from their attainment on entry. Higher attaining pupils achieve well and read at the higher level 3. They understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and know and use terms such as 'author', 'blurb', 'illustrator' and 'contents' correctly. The home/school partnership is a successful feature, although reading comments do not always clearly indicate what parents need to focus on when listening to their children reading. Strengths and weaknesses in pupils' reading are not always shared. A focus on the teaching of the letter sounds raises attainment and accelerates progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Average and lower attaining pupils can put sounds together to make words. By the time that they are seven, the higher attaining pupils read with accuracy and fluency, and can competently discuss the characters in a familiar story. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils are introduced to an exciting range of authors and stories and books, which successfully reflect our culturally diverse society. Consequently higher and average attaining

pupils show a good understanding of a range of texts and can refer to passages in books to support ideas. Book corners and the central library are attractive and appealing.

95 Pupils make good progress in reading in the juniors. Pupils with special educational needs and those who learn English as an additional language make good progress in reading because of good support by teachers and learning assistants. Junior pupils enjoy reading and an average attaining Year 6 pupil says 'Reading is a good break from TV, you can see pictures in your head and it helps with your spelling.'

96 Guided reading is being taught as part of the literacy hour and this incentive had had a good impact on reading standards. A local car manufacturer has committed two of its employees to assist Year 4 boys' reading. This is a very successful initiative, which is improving boys' reading skills. There is a sense of shared enjoyment by all the participants. There have been many improvements to the library. Books are displayed attractively and all classes use the library regularly. Pupil librarians use the computerised lending system competently.

97 Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' attainment in writing is average. The majority of pupils make good progress from a low starting point. The school is working very hard to raise pupils' achievement in writing. For instance, the majority of pupils have individual literacy targets to attempt to raise attainment and accelerate progress. These targets vary in their usefulness and application. Handwriting and spelling are taught regularly in most classes, but some lower attaining pupils experience considerable difficulty in combining neat handwriting, correct spelling and interesting content in a piece of writing. Spelling is weak in many classes and there is no scheme to assist teachers. There is no recent handwriting scheme and pupils' handwriting and presentation varies considerably. Written tasks in some classes are not always matched to pupils' different levels of ability, and in many cases, all pupils receive the same tasks.

98 Pupils in the Year 1 classes are encouraged to write independently and to use their knowledge of phonics in their writing. Lessons and work sampling shows that the virtually all the pupils write clear and logical sentences using capital letters and full stops. Writing is well formed, correctly punctuated and shows good use of adjectives. For instance one pupil writes: 'The fairy Godmother made Cinderella beautiful.' Pupils in Year 2 produce an extensive, range of work, which includes fiction, and poetry. Work sampling indicates some differences in teachers' expectations in both the infants and the juniors. Spelling and handwriting remain weaknesses. Many pupils do not have a clear understanding of basic spelling rules and lack strategies to spell new words. Year 5 teachers have begun a useful project to improve pupils' spelling, which is intended to be used consistently throughout the school. Some teachers do not provide sufficient prompts such as target vocabulary to assist pupils' writing in all subjects. Teachers have worked hard to improve handwriting and presentation but standards are inconsistent between different year groups and between parallel classes. Nevertheless, lesson observations and work sampling reveal many vibrant and exciting pieces of written English. For instance a higher attaining Year 6 pupil writes skilfully and expressively about Spring: 'Weather changes from cold rustling wind to warm dancing breezes... Nature gently sways to the breeze of the tickling air.' Sentences such as 'Earth opens its mouth for life' demonstrate maturity and sensitivity. Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to word process their English work. Computers were used well in literacy lessons during the inspection.

99 The quality of teaching is good overall. It ranges from satisfactory to very good. Teachers have a good understanding of how to teach reading and writing. Teachers make sure pupils know what they are expected to learn and how this links to what they have covered previously. Many, but not all, teachers make good use of question and answer sessions to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Expectations of what pupils can do vary and work is not always planned for different needs. Most teachers maintain a brisk lesson pace and keep pupils busy. This is particularly evident in the literacy hour lessons where pupils waste no time in settling to group activities after sharing a

class discussion. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the National Literacy Strategy. Assessment of reading and writing is thorough and regular, although results from assessments are not always used effectively to target groups of pupils to raise attainment. A more consistent approach to identifying specific vocabulary in all subjects and to practising writing skills in other subjects are points for development.

100 All staff and in particular the temporary English co-ordinator are committed to raising standards of attainment in English, particularly writing. The temporary co-ordinator is extremely accomplished in driving forward improvement and has achieved many successes in a very short time. One area recognised for refinement is the organisation of learning sets; these work well in the infants but not in the upper juniors. The top set in English is working effectively in enabling demanding work to be set and a good pace maintained. However the two lower sets comprise an equal mix of middle and lower ability pupils and this is not working for those pupils who could attain at a higher level. The school has yet to evaluate fully the effectiveness of sets in English in order to make improvement. There has been very good focused monitoring of teaching and learning which has resulted in strengths and weaknesses being identified and addressed. This work is proving invaluable in highlighting where the inconsistencies are in teaching and learning. Reasonable targets have been set to raise standards in English and the school is well on track to meet them.

MATHEMATICS

101 Standards in mathematics are judged to be average by the age of both seven and eleven years. This represents a distinct improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were judged to be below national averages at both these ages. Pupils made poor progress in Year 1 and erratic progress in the juniors: pupils now make steady gains throughout their time in school. Higher attaining pupils, who tended to underachieve, are now effectively challenged and rise to the demands made on them. The setting arrangements are having a good impact on raising standards in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs, who sometimes struggled to cope, are now well supported and make sound progress in their understanding as well as in their knowledge, although sometimes better use could be made of practical apparatus to reinforce learning. Pupils' books indicate that the school makes good provision for those for whom English is an additional language, so that language is not a barrier to their progress in mathematics. All of these improvements are supporting positively the raising of standards in mathematics. The LEA is continuing to support the school's developments in numeracy and this too is a positive feature.

102 Standards in mathematics are considerably better at the end of the junior phase than they were in 1997. At the end of Year 6, the school's results in the National Curriculum tests for pupils show an improvement from 1997 to 2000. Results were below average in 2001. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 5 was below average and this affected the overall results. The school predicted these results in advance of the tests and expected far fewer pupils than seen nationally to achieve at the higher level. The pupils' performance showed that they had made satisfactory overall improvement since Year 2. The school has given good attention to providing opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills across the curriculum; the shortage of time for this reported in 1997 is no longer an issue.

103 Lessons are well planned and make sound use of the National Numeracy Strategy. They start with a short oral session devoted to mental arithmetic. While these are appropriate, they do not always have sufficient variety or urgency to make sufficient demands on pupils' mental processes. Where they are well used, teachers ensure that pupils discuss their method of arriving at the answer, so that good practice is shared and developed. Some pupils demonstrate good strategies, such as looking for pairs of numbers to make ten, or rounding numbers up or down, but others are less aware, for example counting on from 3 to find the difference between 3 and 21 even in Year 6.

104 Pupils cover all the appropriate areas of mathematics. There is a strong and commendable focus on problem solving, and higher attaining pupils in particular are able to think their way through quite complicated questions, using the skills they have been taught. Year 6 pupils demonstrate this very effectively, using logic to decide what numbers a series of letters must represent and in so doing decode a word search. In Year 4 they decide which of a group of fractions are equivalent to one tenth, discussing and questioning each other's ideas. In Year 2 this process is limited by some gaps in their knowledge. Pupils are unsure of simple fractions such as halves and quarters, even in a practical context, and do not recognise the term 'right angle'. This is underlined by the content of pupils' books throughout the school, where there is not much evidence of work on shape, space and measure. However, talking to pupils of all abilities indicates that they are encouraged to think mathematically, rather than just memorise facts or methods without real understanding.

105 Mathematics is well taught. Teaching during the course of the inspection was good in both the infants and juniors. Lessons are well planned (indeed occasionally over-planned, with too many learning intentions!) and often conducted with good pace. Resources are well organised and teachers use effective methods, and although sometimes there is too much talk at the expense of activity, the activities themselves are well targeted to offer sufficient challenge. Teachers use questions well to make pupils think, and place good emphasis on proper mathematical vocabulary. Pupils are set by ability from Year 1, and this contributes positively to the progress they make. Within these sets pupils

are still given varying tasks depending on their ability, although occasionally the higher attaining pupils are insufficiently taxed, having too few open-ended tasks where they have to make their own decisions.

106 One weakness apparent from looking at pupils' work over the year is presentation. Pupils' books show quite a lot of untidy and unfinished work. This reflects poorly on both the expectations of teachers and the response of pupils, affecting accuracy and indicating a lack of pride. This contrasts with pupils' attitudes to mathematics in lessons or when in discussion with inspectors. They are enthusiastic about mathematics and are keen to explain how they work things out. They work well when set a task, either independently or in pairs.

107 The co-ordinator is new this year, both to the school and the subject, and is working very hard to familiarise herself with the needs of the mathematics curriculum. The assessment systems being put in place have a lot of potential, and there is a strong commitment to driving up standards through good practice. The co-ordinator has yet to be involved in the direct monitoring of mathematics teaching, but she has undertaken the analysis of pupils' books with the senior management team and examined teachers' planning with the Numeracy Consultant, to assist in developing a clear overview of teaching and learning across the school. The school's accurate identification of future needs, together with the co-ordinator's commitment, mean that mathematics is in a good position to continue to improve.

SCIENCE

108 Standards in science are better at the end of the junior phase than they were in 1997. In the teacher-assessed tasks for 2001, the percentage of pupils at the end of Year 2 who achieved the national expectation of level 2 or above was in line with the national average. At the end of Year 6, the school's results in the National Curriculum tests for pupils show an improvement from 1997 to 2000, but with a decline in 2001, when standards of attainment were below average. This dip in standards was not unexpected by the school and was due to the nature of the cohort. In comparison with similar schools, standards were above average. Inspection findings show that standards at both the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average. Recent improvements, in particular better teaching and an appropriate scheme of work to guide the progress pupils make, are having a beneficial impact on the overall standards that pupils attain, so that there has been an overall good improvement in the subject. A significant minority of pupils are attaining at a higher level through the challenges provided and this proportion is increasing. There has been a slight difference between the performance of boys and girls in the national tests; but this was not apparent in lessons where both are equally enthusiastic and are achieving appropriately.

109 By the end of Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the different elements of science and are aware of the need for investigation and inquiry. The majority of pupils make predictions based on what they already know, respond to suggestions on how to find things out, and, with prompting, make their own suggestions. Some higher attaining pupils are beginning to express their own ideas about finding solutions and making observations. They suggest criteria for making an investigation 'fair'. This was exemplified in a lesson in which pupils were investigating different materials in which to grow seeds, when some pupils suggested that it was important that the same amount of water should be given to each seed container. They know how the height of slopes can affect the speed at which an object can move. They enjoy practical investigations and are gaining from their experiences, but some become over-excited and forget what they are trying to find out. Previous work shows that pupils in Year 1 explore the five senses, magnetism and how to use different materials. All pupils record their work in a variety of ways, such as charts, diagrams, teacher-made worksheets and independent writing. However, the recording of work in Year 1 is of a better quality than Year 2, where frequently the standard of presentation is untidy.

110 By the end of Year 6, pupils have gained a secure body of scientific knowledge, and for a number of higher attaining pupils, their knowledge and understanding is good. Pupils in Year 6 competently employ a wide range of methods to record their findings. They use the results of their observations to draw conclusions, and their independent writing shows the good depth of their knowledge. The higher attaining pupils record in detail, for example, their work on life cycles and food chains. They show their good understanding of the investigative side of the subject through their thorough writing on such experiments as irreversible changes. This knowledge is reflected in their discussions of previous work, where they competently explain the nature and purpose of their investigations. One pupil who has English as an additional language explained his experiments on dissolving, filtering and sieving using the correct terminology and showing a good understanding of the processes. The lower ability pupils offer explanation of their work in appropriate terms, demonstrating that they have received the necessary support. Through well-conducted experiments pupils throughout the junior phase develop their knowledge and skills well. The work of pupils in Years 3 to 6 reflects a broad spectrum of learning across all the elements of the subject. Year 3 pupils examine the absorbency of paper, and Year 4 pupils test which materials slow down the melting of ice cubes. In a Year 5 lesson on flowers and pollination, pupils show their good knowledge of plants and the parts of a flower, confidently describing the function of parts such as the stigma and stamen. They identify this on the diagrams, and then eagerly and proudly show that they can identify the parts on real flowers!

111 Pupils' progress is good overall. An analysis of work in pupils' books shows that good learning has taken place from entry into Year 1 to the end of Year 6. It is better in the junior phase, where the frequently appropriate challenges allow for the good progress of higher attaining pupils. In a small minority of lessons in the infant phase, progress was slower when work was not well matched to pupils' ability and the management of pupils was not effective enough. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make sound progress. The progress made by pupils who speak English as a second language is good. Teachers recognise the need for these pupils to acquire the necessary vocabulary in order for them to express their understanding of what they are learning in science.

112 The teaching of science is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge and most plan carefully, using a range of strategies. There is a good balance between teachers' exposition and pupils' activities and frequently direct teaching is of a high order. This enables pupils to have an appropriate experience of investigation alongside gains in knowledge and understanding. It also means that pupils are interested and involved in their tasks, and they have a sound understanding of their own learning. The teaching of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is consistently good, with two very good lessons seen. Management of pupils is firm but friendly and lessons proceed at a brisk pace, therefore allowing for maximum learning opportunities. The result of teachers' expectations for work and behaviour is that the great majority of pupils are diligent and use and share their equipment sensibly. In a very good lesson observed, the teacher used effective questioning, which ensured the development of thinking skills alongside skills of observation. In spite of the cramped and difficult conditions of the accommodation, the teacher ensured that all pupils had plenty of opportunity to participate equally and sensibly in the investigation taking place. The teaching of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. There are good features to the teaching of younger pupils, where they are systematically learning the necessary early science skills and are encouraged to observe and record their findings carefully. In Year 2, teachers plan interesting tasks for pupils to carry out an investigation. However, insufficient attention is given to carefully planned organisation for all abilities. This results in missed opportunities to really extend and challenge what pupils learn. One unsatisfactory lesson was characterised by tasks not well-matched to pupils' abilities, and unsatisfactory management of pupils' behaviour. Consequently there was some confusion about the nature of the tasks, noise levels were too high and many pupils failed to make the progress of which

they were capable. The quality of teachers' marking is variable. Where it is good teachers make evaluative comments, but frequently marking consists of ticks and brief comments.

113 The curriculum for science is broad and balanced and provides good learning opportunities and guidelines. The structured planning of the scheme of work contributes to the systematic building of skills and knowledge. Pupils' literacy skills are extended through good use of subject related vocabulary, which also deepens their technical understanding. The subject also contributes satisfactorily to pupils' mathematical skills, for example through the use of data in Year 3 to show how materials stretch. ICT is used increasingly well in the collection and recording of data. Science makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils reflect on what they learn, and show wonder at the natural world. Through teachers' organisation of their learning and their high expectations for positive attitudes, pupils learn to co-operate together and respect each others' ideas.

114 The science co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has clear direction for the subject. She has sought and effectively used the advice given in order to ensure the development of the subject and to raise standards. She has had opportunity to look at teachers' planning and at pupils' work, but has not yet had sufficient opportunity to have a more positive impact on the subject, and has not yet had effective opportunity to look at the results of assessment. The procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and achievements in science are good. Teachers make regular assessments at the end of each half term, and record the results efficiently. This gives a clear picture of what individual pupils are achieving as they move into the next class. The use of the information gained from assessment is satisfactory. Teachers use it to inform curriculum planning for the next stage of learning. However, it is not used to set group or individual targets to help pupils to know better what standards they should aspire to, or how to improve their work.

ART AND DESIGN

115 There has been an improvement in the provision made for art and design since the previous inspection and standards are now average at the end of Year 2 and 6.

116 The teaching and learning for pupils in Years 3 to 6 has improved and is now satisfactory and sometimes good. This is because there is now a scheme of work that follows the government guidelines for art and design and teachers are becoming more skilful and confident in implementing it. However, this is very new and pupils have gaps in their knowledge as a result of many staff changes and inconsistencies in the teaching of the curriculum over previous years. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are working hard to achieve average standards. Their enthusiasm and interest are as a result of teachers who are committed to raising standards, widening curriculum opportunities and providing stability and continuity to the art curriculum. Resources have been improved recently. However, there needs to be more emphasis placed upon the use of appropriate paper for display in order to improve its aesthetic quality. The art project, which takes place after school, provides very good opportunities for a small number of pupils to experience a good range of media. Teachers who accompany pupils to these sessions have good opportunities to develop their own ideas and skills.

117 No lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2, but the work on display and teachers' planning reflects satisfactory teaching and learning. There are sound examples of the pupils' response to a variety of ideas. For example in the explanation of a pattern, one pupil describes it as, 'a sequence or cycle of colours'. Good examples are provided in explaining texture 'as something to feel or touch', but pupils are unable to explain techniques, such as creating tones of colour. Teachers are pushing the boundaries in order to stimulate and fire pupils' creative ideas. Three very different lessons were seen in Years 3, 4 and 6, involving a collage of natural objects in the style of Andy Goldsworthy, sketching a still life composition in various media and using tissue paper to create a collage of a

butterfly. Teachers are creative in trying to overcome the cramped and noisy accommodation that their classrooms provide, and remain positive, determined and encouraging throughout their lessons, ensuring that pupils achieve the best that they can. Sketchbooks have been used infrequently in the past but pupils in Years 1 and 2 are beginning to practise and test ideas and techniques. Teaching is satisfactory overall in junior classes with some examples of good teaching. For example in Year 4, a teacher used her great-grandfather's sketch book to enliven a lesson about line and tone. Unfortunately the strong spiritual element was lost when the class in the next bay began their work and their exuberance shattered the calm atmosphere. Pupils are enthusiastic and behave well, even when lessons are cramped due to the size of the classrooms and when there is noise from an adjoining classroom. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress because activities are appropriately matched to their individual needs and both groups are given just the right amount of support to enable them to achieve well.

118 The use of ICT to support art and design work is effective, being planned and used more frequently in creative art than in design. In Year 3, pupils took photographs with a digital camera to record patterns using stones and other natural materials. The co-ordinator is very interested in using a scanner to improve standards and provide a wider perspective in art.

119 The recent improvements are mainly due to the leadership of the newly appointed co-ordinator and her enthusiasm for art and design, as well as the good support and encouragement she gives to colleagues. Sufficient emphasis has yet to be given to promoting pupils' skills in art and design through display. The subject does not have a high profile in the school and this is a missed opportunity. The increased profile planned for art and design together with a portfolio of examples of work at specific levels of attainment, will help to raise teachers' expectations and assist the intended assessment process.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

120 Standards in design and technology have improved since the previous inspection and are now average by the age of seven and eleven. This represents good improvement by the end of Year 6 although there are still gaps in pupils' knowledge. Progress over time has been affected by the many staff changes which have resulted in inconsistencies in the delivery of the curriculum. However, pupils' expertise improves as they move through the school so that by the end of Year 2, they know how to use tools and join materials to make a construction stronger. As one pupil confidently explained, 'you add more to hold it up'. They use tools that are provided, but need more opportunities to make their own decisions and choices about these. Pupils make basic plans for achieving their intentions and think ahead about the sequence of their work. For example, pupils in Year 2 mark out the point on a box for the winding mechanism to be positioned and understand that measuring will make the model more accurate. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make sound progress in lessons.

121 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and very good in Year 2. All teachers organise their lessons well, particularly in Years 1 and 2, which results in pupils learning at a good pace with no loss of time. A sound development of skills was seen in a Year 6 lesson when pupils explained how to design and construct a totem pole and 'dream catcher' together with a clear explanation of the processes necessary in joining a structure to make it both fit for purpose and aesthetically pleasing. Teachers are gaining confidence in their subject expertise and lessons are well prepared, which results in sound learning throughout the school. Because teachers are clear in their explanations, and objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson, pupils are clear about what they have to achieve. They work enthusiastically and behave well even when classrooms are cramped. In Year 5, for example, pupils sensibly evaluate their musical instruments, learning from the variety of imaginative ideas and constructions. Teachers create a good working environment where relationships are very good, opinions are listened to and everyone's work is treated with respect. Opportunities to allow older pupils to make choices in the gathering of information and generating their own ideas would further improve standards. In Year 1 this process has been adopted successfully in the planning of a new playground area.

122 The subject coordinator has recently been appointed and has identified realistic priorities for future improvements, usefully building on the expertise of the previous co-ordinator.

GEOGRAPHY

123 It was only possible to see one lesson during the inspection, so evidence has been obtained by a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils and teachers. The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 is below the national average. This reflects the findings of the previous report, and therefore shows little improvement. Although no lessons were seen in Year 6, a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils show that pupils' attainment is broadly average. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were below the national average. However, the achievements of pupils overall are limited by the constraints of the timetable. The time allocated to geography is insufficient for the subject to be taught to an appropriate depth to enable all pupils to achieve a secure base of knowledge and skills.

124 Only two pieces of work appear in the books of Year 2 and this is not of a good quality. While pupils record the visit of the school to a farm with much enthusiasm, their work generally is brief and does not show good quality learning. In the one lesson seen, pupils show in discussion that they can recognise a world map, and are becoming aware that different foods come from different countries. Year 1 begin early mapping skills by making a map for Red Riding Hood to follow. They

recognise the seasons and changes in the weather, but their range of learning is narrow. Progress for all groups of the younger pupils of the school is unsatisfactory.

125 At the end of Year 6, pupils show that they have a solid base to their geography learning. An analysis of their work shows that their knowledge and understanding of issues concerning the rain forests is good. Their writing of a statement of beliefs, amongst other independent writing, shows that geography is making a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In discussions, the pupils in Year 6 display their knowledge of geography themes and places. They have a sound recall of previous work on rivers and places, and talk with concern on important issues such as pollution and global warming. They are familiar with the main features on a world map, and use the correct terminology when describing their work.

126 The progress of pupils in Year 6 is satisfactory overall, but otherwise progress is variable throughout Years 3 to 5. The work in pupils' book shows no adaptation for different abilities and different groups, apart from greater teacher support to help lower ability pupils to complete charts or worksheets. There are few opportunities for worthwhile independent recording. In Year 3, work is frequently untidy and muddled. There are some interesting letters regarding the improvements to the local park in Year 4, but there has not been sufficient opportunity for pupils to explore their locality with appropriate depth. The work in Year 5 shows an inadequate development of skills or opportunity for pupils to conduct their own research, indicating a lack of balance in what is being taught. However, teaching has had a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to the subject. In discussions with pupils, they indicate an enjoyment of geography. Year 6 are keen to impart their knowledge and talk in detail about what they have learned. Similarly, a group of Year 4 pupils talked enthusiastically about how and why their own locality has changed, and showed a good level of interest in comparing where they live with a village in India.

127 Overall, teaching is just about satisfactory. A scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that the new scheme of work is providing the necessary guidance for progression and this is a real improvement since the previous inspection. The planning and work for older pupils show that most teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge, but are limited in the time they have to implement a balanced range of learning in the subject. Teaching is more thorough in Year 6 where there is a good balance of skills and knowledge. The planning for younger pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 frequently lacks definitive learning objectives. At times, what the teacher wants pupils to learn in any one lesson is too wide and lacks clarity. Although teaching was satisfactory in the one lesson seen, and pupils were interested, the scarcity of topics throughout the year means that teaching for the younger pupils of the school is unsatisfactory. The allocated lesson time for pupils in Year 2 is fragmented, and for both Year 1 and Year 2 takes place at the end of the afternoon, which is not conducive to worthwhile learning.

128 Positive links are made with mathematics and ICT in the collection and recording of data in some areas of the subject. Pupils in Year 6 use their literacy skills well when recording their work, but the good use of literacy is not consistent throughout the school. The subject is enhanced by regular visits to places of interest, or visitors to the school such as the Countryside Centre in Year 2.

129 The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and recognises the weaknesses in the subject, having identified time as a contributory factor to weaknesses in what pupils achieve. This has also been recognised by teachers in response to the co-ordinator's review of the subject. The co-ordinator obtains an overview of standards and progress by monitoring work and plans annually, but has not had sufficient opportunity to use her expertise for the development of the subject. Opportunities for assessment are written into the schemes of work and the results recorded by teachers. However, the procedures and use of assessment are not yet effective enough in identifying strengths and weaknesses in the subject, or in enabling teachers to plan for different abilities and groups. Planning

is not monitored stringently enough to ensure that the objectives for learning are consistently related to the programmes of study by all teachers.

HISTORY

130 Seven and eleven-year-old pupils continue to achieve the average standards noted at the last inspection. Progress is now steady across the school and the unevenness in the infants reported previously was not evident this time. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as their classmates but some of those who do not use English as their first language make better progress because of the good support they receive to assist their learning across the curriculum and the specific targets set in literacy that are enabling good improvement. The work of a Year 6 pupil who is bilingual, for example, is amongst the best in the class.

131 Pupils in Year 6 have satisfactory knowledge of the historical topics they have studied. They produce attractive folders of work about life in Britain since the 1930s exploring the causes of World War II and researching life in the 1950s and 'the swinging 60s'. The Internet has been used to find information and the variety of written work provides sound opportunities for them to develop their literacy skills. For example, they write newspaper articles, draw a propaganda poster for the WRAF and recreate a wartime recipe. These good features in Year 6 are not always as evident in other year groups. In some classes, for example, there is widespread use of 'fill-in' worksheets when some pupils are capable of writing their own accounts. There is scope, too, for more use of computer programs to promote learning in history.

132 Pupils in Year 2 have completed a study of homes past and present and know about several famous people from the past, for example Guy Fawkes and Christopher Columbus. They have visited the Partnership Centre and been dressed in historical costumes so that, at first-hand, they can compare modern clothes and realise the differences. Visits make a lasting impression on pupils. Those in Year 5 visited the Chapelfields area of the city during the inspection and displayed considerable knowledge of the Victorian watch-making industry when they returned. It inspired them to produce their own guide-books. Teachers often take examples from the history of Coventry to make work relevant. In their Tudor study, for example, Year 4 pupils hear the story of Henry Pegge, a draper's apprentice in Coventry and this helps them to understand the life of someone not much older than them in past times. Experiences such as these contribute well to an awareness of their cultural heritage. All pupils are fully involved in the work.

133 Teachers are aware of the need to develop historical skills as well as factual knowledge and from Year 1 pupils are taught that information can be gleaned from a variety of sources: books, photographs, people and historical objects, for example. However, the co-ordinator is aware that the development of skills is still an area for development. In most of the pupils' books, the same work is given to everybody to complete irrespective of their ability. Teachers often miss opportunities to let more able pupils, for example, conduct their own research and in this way develop the skill of historical enquiry as well as extending their knowledge. One pupil who does this in Year 6 produces a high-quality account of 'Living in an Occupied Country' that shows real empathy with the people of the time.

134 Teaching overall is satisfactory but some better lessons were seen where the positive relationships promoted good quality discussions. In Year 1, for example, pupils are very keen to talk about differences in their lives and those of their grandparents: "Ironing is easier now because we don't have to heat irons in the fire." Pupils in Year 3 have been inspired by their work about the Roman invasion of Britain and two boys spontaneously brought in work from home. One had made a shield and sword and another had downloaded information from his computer's encyclopaedia. Teachers use resources well and prepare their lessons thoroughly but they are not always precise

enough in defining exactly what they want pupils to learn in a lesson: 'to know about Christopher Columbus' is too broad an objective and this inhibits useful assessments of progress too. There is still no standardised system of assessing the standards and progress that pupils achieve. Over the past three years there have been several co-ordinators but the present post-holder has correctly identified the priorities for development, in particular the need to update the programme of work in the light of recent national guidance and to ensure that there is sufficient time for it to be covered in depth.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

135 The standards achieved by pupils in Years 2 and 6 are similar to those found in other schools. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained for seven-year-olds but have improved for the oldest pupils. In recent months, provision has improved because all teachers have attended training sessions that have given them renewed confidence and expertise. Teaching overall is now good throughout the school and, in lessons, pupils generally learn well. Progress over time, however, is satisfactory rather than good because pupils are only now systematically acquiring the necessary skills and developing an understanding of the computer's capabilities. There is not the bank of past work available to suggest that previous learning was better than satisfactory. Teachers' planning shows coverage of all the required elements of ICT through the year, though certain strands, for example the control of equipment to make things happen, were not seen during the inspection.

136 Pupils in Year 2 are successful in creating images using the 'spray' tool in a paint program. They create shapes and infill with colour because of their previous learning, and print and save their work competently. Their skill in using the mouse is mirrored by the six-year-olds who are uninhibited when asked to write a sentence about their family using a word-processor. They know how to create a capital letter and how to use the space bar and the backspace key correctly. By Year 6, many pupils are very confident in their use of the computer. Currently, they are creating an impressive series of slides about the weather, importing images and text and adding sounds to enliven their presentation. During the week of inspection, one boy presented the slide-show that he had prepared at home to the delight of his classmates. This skill of importing images is begun in Year 3 when pupils use a bank of images to choose something appropriate, such as a Roman soldier, to illustrate particular pieces of text about the Roman invasion of Britain.

137 Year 5 pupils are learning to search a database to find information about the inhabitants of a housing development. They learn to use technical terms such as 'field' and 'folder' and how to define precisely the question that they want answered, for example, "Which people have access to a garage?" The teacher conducted a very good lesson, carefully explaining the search process step-by-step and organising her large class so that all had a turn on the computer. Those who did not have immediate access created a database on paper, sorting out musical instruments into categories and sub-categories. She insisted that pupils paid close attention to her teaching and was skilled at helping those who got into difficulties, having very good knowledge of the subject. Teaching overall is good. One unsuccessful lesson occurred when the teacher was unable to curb the behaviour of a small number of pupils who were particularly challenging. The time taken to manage the behaviour reduced the time available on the computers for the class and restricted learning. Teachers generally harness the pupils' enthusiasm productively and maximise the time for 'hands-on' activity. They set challenging tasks and have high expectations that pupils can cope. In most lessons, pupils of mixed ability share a computer and they work well together. This has benefits, particularly for pupils who are not entirely confident in the use of English and those with special educational needs. It helps them to make the same progress as their classmates because of the guidance offered by their more confident partners. Sometimes, however, it would be worthwhile to sit the above average together so that they can forge ahead with more difficult work.

138 The advantages of the computer to assist learning in other subjects are beginning to be exploited. The Internet has been used by pupils in Year 6, to find historical information about 20th-century Britain. These pupils too have created a graph to show the temperatures in Manaus and London as part of their geography work. In Year 5, a software program is used to improve mental maths. It sets the pupils problems such as to add two three-digit numbers for example. In Year 4, newspaper reports written during literacy lessons are word-processed and enlivened by pictures from 'Clip Art'. Year 1 pupils also use a word-processor to help them to write their stories about 'Oscar'. This bodes well for the future and some teachers are beginning to include an ICT element in their lesson plans. Other facilities too are being developed. E-mail addresses are assigned to each pupil but there is no arrangement yet with another school to exchange messages. The school has its own website but pupils' pages are still in the process of being compiled.

139 Resources are satisfactory but the school has plans in the pipeline to extend the computer suite and increase the number of computers. There are good quality machines in the suite but only enough to allow half a class to work at a time unless two or sometimes three pupils share a computer. Extra machines are available in all classrooms but were not widely used during the inspection. The school benefits from the resources provided through the Education Action Zone (EAZ). They are having a tangible effect on improving pupils' ICT skills. An assistant funded by the EAZ gives good quality support in lessons on one morning each week and money has enabled the school to purchase an interactive whiteboard. This enables the teacher to relay information from the computer so that all pupils can see it. It was particularly well used during a literacy lesson to illustrate the features of instructional writing about 'How A Car Works'. The presentation fascinated the pupils, particularly the boys, as pieces of text zoomed on to the screen. It promoted their learning well. The subject is being well managed by the deputy headteacher during the absence of the co-ordinator. She is an expert herself in the field and has correctly identified the important areas for future development, including the standardisation of an assessment system that will enable the standards and progress of individual pupils to be tracked.

MUSIC

140 Pupils throughout the school attain the standards expected for their age and really enjoy their music making activities. The school has maintained the good provision for music seen during the previous inspection. The tuition provided by visiting specialist teachers is a strength of the school. This enables the more able musicians to achieve well.

141 All pupils sing well showing good control of pitch, dynamics and rhythm. The eighty-strong choir is very impressive, and is motivated and challenged very well by the co-ordinator who is a music specialist. They display good pitch as they sing a syncopated rhythm in three parts. Their expression and phrasing are superb and they have clear enunciation. Pupils are lively and very enthusiastic and very much enjoy the privilege of being in the choir.

142 During the inspection, Year 6 pupils demonstrated that they can sing in unison and in two parts showing a clear sense of pitch, phrase and musical expression. This happened during a 'Morning of Music' which was shared with four other schools. Over 100 pupils were superbly led and inspired by a specialist teacher. Pupils played tuned and untuned instruments with very good control and rhythmic accuracy. They presented a performance with a good understanding of entertaining an audience whilst really enjoying the musical experiences themselves. Music making was fun and very enjoyable, as pupils sang chants and raps, which culminated in an outstanding rendition of 'The City Chant'. The whole performance was both exceptionally skilful and extremely moving. The leader's enthusiasm was infectious and instilled confidence in the pupils so that they rose to the challenge and performed brilliantly.

143 Year 4 and 5 pupils receive very good teaching and learning from a specialist music teacher. They learn to compose and perform 'cyclic patterns' working well in small groups, using a variety of percussion instruments with skill. Year 2 and 3 pupils benefit from lessons with a specialist recorder teacher. Unfortunately, on a few occasions pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties disrupt these lessons for other pupils. The few lessons seen which were taught by teachers were judged to be satisfactory and the co-ordinator has identified further staff training as an area for development.

144 Music makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. It is used very effectively in assemblies and in Sathya Sai lessons to promote an understanding of different times and cultures. A wide range of visitors are invited into school to perform live music. Pupils have enjoyed Indian music, traditional Irish music, electronic music and a Samba band from a nearby secondary school. There are many opportunities for pupils to perform in front of a live audience; for instance recorder assemblies, Christmas productions, the annual Arts evening and 'The Power and Spirit' project.

145 The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and has considerable personal expertise. Her overriding aim is for all pupils to enjoy their music making, which they certainly do! There are very clear plans for future developments. The provision of resources, particularly to support the making of music from a wide range of cultures has improved considerably since the last inspection. There are adequate resources available to support the effective delivery of the whole music curriculum. The music studio is a useful resource, although somewhat small for whole class teaching.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

146 Standards in physical education (PE) are average at the ages of seven and eleven. Pupils follow a planned programme that incorporates the elements of gymnastics, dance and games. Swimming is taught in Year 3, with all pupils going for about ten weeks and those in need of further practice having another ten weeks. Despite this, in the last recorded year only about half the pupils achieved the national target of swimming 25 metres unaided. Standards are higher this year, two-thirds having achieved the standard with a term's instruction still to come. One games lesson was seen in the infants, and three dance lessons in the juniors. No gymnastics was being taught during the inspection, so judgements are based on conversations with teachers and looking at planning.

147 There has been good improvement since the previous inspection, especially for the older pupils, where standards were judged to be below expectations. There are now schemes of work for teachers to follow in games and gymnastics, and in-service training in dance is planned for the summer that will result in a scheme of work for this area. As a result teaching, which was heavily criticised by the last inspection, particularly for older pupils where it was unsatisfactory overall, is much better, with three out of the four lessons seen judged to be good. The number of sports clubs means that all pupils have the chance to develop their skills and expertise in a variety of games and athletic activities.

148 Pupils in Year 2 work enthusiastically in a games lesson, practising bouncing balls with increasing control. There is a good focus on the development of skills, which are well taught. As a result all pupils make progress in the lesson, with higher attaining pupils in particular demonstrating a good level of attainment. The teacher uses these pupils effectively to show what can be done, but does not invite comment from other pupils as to why they are successful. This is a missed opportunity to involve them in their own learning through thinking about what makes good practice.

149 Three dance lessons seen in the juniors were all successful, and overall the teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and organised with a clear focus. Pupils work best where there is a good pace and plenty of activity, with pupils being given sufficient challenge to improve their own

performance. Pupils in Year 4, who dance their interpretation of a poem (a useful link with literacy), use a range of movement patterns. These show imagination, but greater control over speed and body shape is needed to raise standards further. Pupils in Year 6 in contrast learn the set moves associated with country dancing, such as 'right hand star', 'cast off' and 'docey-do'. They perform these well, keeping in time with the music. Again, however, there could be more encouragement to dance with greater poise and style once the basic movements have been grasped. It is apparent that pupils respond well to both types of dance, with the great majority showing enjoyment in the activity and pleasure in their achievement.

150 The co-ordinator has strong subject knowledge and expertise and uses this effectively to promote good teaching of younger pupils. She has less opportunity to influence practice with older pupils, and has only recently started to monitor planning for PE. Assessment is not used consistently enough to provide a useful picture of individual progress in skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

151 There has been a significant improvement in the standards achieved by seven and eleven-year-olds since the last inspection. The improvement is due to better planning of lessons, better teaching – no unsatisfactory lessons were seen this time – and to the good leadership of the co-ordinator who is driving forward improvement.

152 Pupils in Year 2 are learning about the events of Easter and, in particular about the symbolism of the bread and the wine that Jesus offered his disciples at the Last Supper. This is a difficult concept but the teacher successfully promoted good understanding by relating it to the pupils' own experiences. One girl, for example, drew a house that reminded her of her former home in India and the teacher talked about a special penny that reminded her of a happy holiday. In earlier work, these pupils have studied different festivals of light - Diwali and Hanukkah, for example - and they know well the story of Guru Nanak and the 'Five Ks' of Sikhism.

153 Pupils in Year 6 have extended their knowledge of Sikhism by studying the sayings of the Gurus. They understand the importance of treating the holy book reverently and have a good grasp on the rituals associated with worship. They too have studied symbolism in religions and know, for example, that the Cross is an important Christian symbol. A visit to Coventry Cathedral has reinforced their understanding of a Christian place of worship and has inspired some impressive artwork, including some high quality stained-glass window designs. The development in their knowledge since Year 2 about Sikhism and Christianity indicates that overall progress across the school is satisfactory. However, it is uneven. In Year 5, for example, there is noticeably less work in pupils' books than in other year-groups. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates, particularly when they receive support as in a Year 2 lesson when the classroom assistant helped them draw symbols that reminded them of something special. Pupils who do not use English as their first language but who become proficient because of the help they receive in the school often make better progress in recording what they learn in RE lessons. A Year 4 pupil, for example, wrote a good quality account of the Christmas story. Teachers value the contributions of all pupils during lessons but some Year 2 pupils miss their RE lesson because they are withdrawn to play recorders. This is not the same group every week but it inevitably leads to some gaps in knowledge. For example, those who missed a lesson about Palm Sunday did not know what the teacher was talking about when she reviewed the events of that day during the lesson about the Last Supper.

154 Teaching is satisfactory overall and pupils are interested in the work. Year 4 pupils were particularly keen to prepare masks and banners and create a dance to celebrate Mardi Gras as part of their study of religious festivals. Visits too create interest and, as well as Christian places of worship, there are good links with a local Hindu temple. Teachers have sufficient understanding of the subject

and make good use of resources such as videos to support their lessons. As at the last inspection, resources are good and are very well catalogued and neatly stored. Teachers do not, as yet, use ICT widely but, in some classes, work satisfactorily supports the development of literacy skills. In Year 6, for example, the martyrdom of St Thomas à Becket is told through pictures and captions and in Year 5 a diary is the chosen style for writing about a slave's life in Egypt during the time of Moses. The work in books indicates that, more often than not, all pupils are asked to complete the same work and some less able pupils, particularly in the infants, struggle to cope, especially when they are required to write independently. Conversely, opportunities are not often taken to extend the more able pupils by allowing them to conduct their own research or write their own accounts rather than complete a worksheet.

155 The subject supports the pupils' cultural development well, enabling them to understand the traditions, values and beliefs of the followers of the major world faiths. Assemblies too support work in RE, particularly when religious festivals are celebrated.

156 RE is well led by the co-ordinator who regularly attends training courses, one of which has led to the introduction of a new system for assessing the standards and progress that pupils achieve. This is being tried out in three year-groups at present. It provides a variety of tasks that are completed at the end of a topic so that teachers can judge the extent to which pupils have acquired the necessary understanding and knowledge. Together with teachers' evaluations of individual lessons, this is helping with the planning of subsequent work and enabling the co-ordinator to acquire a satisfactory understanding of what is being taught in RE across the school. She also scrutinises pupils' work to assess standards but has not had the opportunity to observe any lessons.