

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARKS C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pensnett

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103836

Headteacher: Mrs J Noakes

Reporting inspector: Peter Howlett
23744

Dates of inspection: 18th – 22nd June 2001

Inspection number: 195050

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:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	High Street Pensnett Brierley Hill West Midlands
Postcode:	DY5 4DZ
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Tilley
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23744	Peter Howlett	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology, geography, English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? What should the school do to improve further? How well are pupils taught?
8933	John Chapman	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?
21171	Sally Handford	Team inspector	Science, physical education, religious education, Foundation Stage, special educational needs, equal opportunities	
14732	Enid Korn	Team inspector	Mathematics, history, design and technology	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20010	John Sangster	Team inspector	English, art and design, music	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a Church of England voluntary controlled school for boys and girls aged three to eleven years old. It is a larger than average primary school with 289 full-time pupils on roll and a nursery currently attended on a part-time basis by 57 children. The school serves the area of Pensnett, to the west of Dudley in the West Midlands. The school draws pupils from the local area and many pupils come from homes with some degree of social and economic disadvantage. The school is within a recognised area of socio-economic deprivation and with other local schools forms part of an Education Action Zone. The aims of the Zone include raising achievement and the profile of education within the community. Pupils come from a very wide range of family backgrounds, from families with different interests in education. The majority of pupils come from local authority housing estates and some from a number of small private housing developments. Approximately 25 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals; this is above the national average. Most pupils come from white ethnic backgrounds, and of the seven pupils for whom English is an additional language, none are at the early stage of English language acquisition. The school has identified approximately 33 per cent of its pupils as having special educational needs, for a variety of learning and behaviour difficulties. This is higher than the national average. Three pupils have a statement of special educational need. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that found nationally, and on entry to full-time education, attainment is still below expected standards.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Marks is an improving school. The school is well led and managed by a strong and effective headteacher, clearly focused on raising standards and improving the quality of education. Standards are rising in English, mathematics and science, albeit from a low base. The school is an orderly and happy place with a good sense of community. Teaching is good in the nursery and reception classes and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6, although there are some shortcomings, particularly in Years 3 to 5. The school's strengths outweigh its weaknesses and it gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The nursery and reception classes provide children with a good start to school.
- The attitudes and behaviour of pupils and their relationships with one another are good.
- Opportunities for pupils' personal development are good; provision for their moral development is very good and for social and spiritual development good.
- Arrangements for pupils' welfare and provision for pupils with special education needs are good.
- The headteacher provides good, purposeful leadership.
- The school fosters very positive views among parents.

What could be improved

- The standards that pupils achieve in English, particularly those of the higher attainers.
- The progress of pupils in mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- The consistency in teaching, particularly at Key Stage 2.
- The quality and range of learning experiences in religious education, history and geography, so as to raise standards.
- Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997. That inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school. Since then improvement has been good: the school has successfully addressed most of the key issues arising from the previous inspection. The school has a very positive approach to promoting good behaviour and pupils' behaviour shows significant improvement since the last inspection. The school has improved its monitoring procedures which have led to improvements in the quality of education and teaching. It has taken effective measures to improve standards in English and science and to a lesser extent in mathematics. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have also risen. The headteacher gives firm direction to ensure the school is firmly focused on raising standards, and the school is soundly placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	E*	E	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E lowest 5% nationally E*
Mathematics	D	E	E	E	
Science	E	E*	D	C	

Although results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 were well below national averages in English and mathematics and below average in science, the rate of improvement in results over the last five years is better than the national trend. In English and science, test results rose sharply in 2000. In mathematics, results rose sharply from a very low base in the three years to 1998 before levelling off in the last two years. In the 2000 tests the school achieved its target set for the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 in English and mathematics. Although these percentages were well below the national average in all three subjects, the targets themselves were appropriate, given pupils' prior levels of attainment. Standards of work seen are below those typically found in English, mathematics and science. Pupils make satisfactory progress in English and science but make insufficient progress in mathematics.

Inspection evidence confirms that standards are improving throughout the school. Children at the Foundation Stage achieve well. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress and the proportion of pupils achieving expected levels in English, mathematics and science is not far short of the national figures. Standards in ICT, music, design and technology and physical education are at expected levels at both key stages. Standards in art and design are above expected levels throughout the school. Standards in geography and religious education are at expected levels at Key Stage 1 but below at Key Stage 2, while standards in history are below those expected at Key Stage 1 and in line with expectations at Key Stage 2. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
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Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school, and their attitudes and involvement with their work are good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour around the school, in lessons and on the playground is good. Most pupils respond positively to their teachers' expectations and have a clear understanding of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The school is a calm, orderly and cheerful place.
Personal development and relationships	The school successfully promotes a climate of co-operation and friendliness amongst pupils, and relationships are good. Pupils show good levels of personal responsibility and perform their jobs conscientiously.
Attendance	Attendance rates are unsatisfactory and below those found in most other primary schools. Pupils generally arrive on time.

The school has a consistent and calm approach to managing pupils' behaviour and this has led to a significant improvement since the last inspection.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. During the inspection, 71 lessons or parts of lessons were seen. Teaching was judged to be very good in 11 per cent of lessons, good in 42 per cent, satisfactory in another 42 per cent and unsatisfactory in four per cent. Teaching of English is satisfactory. Teaching of mathematics is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Teaching of science and art and design is good. Teaching of history and religious education is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. Lessons at Key Stage 1 are well organised and prepared, hold pupils' interest and result in purposeful learning. At Key Stage 2, the quality of pupils' learning, and the progress they make are still very much dependent upon the effectiveness of individual teachers' methods. All teachers are competent in teaching the basic skills of numeracy and literacy. Pupils are well managed, relationships between teachers and pupils are good and pupils respond well to teachers' expectations of their behaviour. Work planned is not always well matched to the learning needs of the more able, although low attaining pupils are well supported. The quality of teaching and learning in both nursery and reception classes is good, and effective assistance from the support assistants has a very positive impact on children's learning. The quality of teaching shows a steady improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was unsatisfactory in 19 per cent of lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the learning opportunities at the Foundation Stage are good, and for Years 1 to 6, satisfactory. The school gives

	high priority to English, mathematics and science investigative skills, but there is insufficient focus on the development of writing and ICT skills in other subjects. Extra-curricular provision is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for these pupils is good. There is early identification and assessment and their progress is closely monitored. Individual education plans have clear targets and appropriate learning strategies. Pupils with statements are provided with good support in line with the requirements in their statements. Pupils receive full access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The few pupils with English as an additional language are fully included in all school activities. They make satisfactory progress in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Provision for pupils' moral development is very good and for their spiritual and social development good. The school provides a strong foundation for building up pupils' good behaviour and a clear sense of right and wrong. The promotion of pupils' cultural development is satisfactory but the school does not do enough to develop their appreciation of other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good procedures and practices ensure a high standard of pupil welfare. Positive strategies and a strong school ethos support pupils' good attitudes and standards of behaviour. There are shortcomings in the school's assessment procedures and those for ICT are unsatisfactory.

The school works hard to improve its relations with parents, and its partnership with them has improved since the last inspection.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership and shows a clear vision for the future direction of the school. She is soundly supported by the senior management team. The role of curriculum coordinators is underdeveloped and their effectiveness variable.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body meets its legal requirements. Governors are involved appropriately in the school's development planning and they work hard on a range of committees. They have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is satisfactory. The headteacher analyses test data effectively, but subject co-ordinators do not share sufficiently in the analysis of data about the standards.
The strategic use of resources	Financial management is prudent. Financial administration is good and governors have adequate procedures to ensure that they gain 'best value' and that expenditure is closely linked to improving standards. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school has a suitable number of staff to teach the National Curriculum. The accommodation provides good facilities for teaching the curriculum and there is a sound range of resources to support pupils' learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils like coming to school. • The good behaviour in the school. • Teaching is good. • The school helps their children become mature and responsible. • The school is well led and managed. • The school has a successful open door policy and staff are approachable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework arrangements. .

Most parents have positive views of the school and are well satisfied with their children's progress and the work of the school. The inspection team judges that teachers make satisfactory use of homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The majority of children start in the nursery with skills that are well below those typically found. There are particular weaknesses in children's language and communication skills. However, there has been a good improvement in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection, so that children are now achieving well. The majority of pupils are likely to attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. In mathematical development the oldest and most able children are likely to exceed the goals. Although the provision for the development of communication, language and literacy is mainly good, the majority of children are unlikely to attain the early learning goals in this area because of their low starting points.
2. The improvement in standards achieved by the children as they enter Year 1 are now having an impact on standards achieved by seven year olds and on national test results at the end of Key Stage 1. Results in the 2000 national tests were well below average in reading and very low in writing and in mathematics. Validated results for 2001 show a significant improvement and inspection evidence confirms this rise in standards and that pupils make satisfactory progress.
3. Low standards at Key Stage 2 are, in part, a legacy of low standards on entry to this key stage and past deficiencies in provision. Nevertheless, by the time the eleven years old pupils leave the school they achieve higher standards than were achieved by pupils at the time of the last inspection. Although results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 remain well below the national averages in English and mathematics and below average in science, the overall rate of improvement over the last five years is better than the national trend. The school has made satisfactory strides in closing the gap between its performance and results nationally. In English and science, test results rose sharply in 2000. In mathematics, results rose sharply from a very low base in the three years to 1998 before levelling off in the last two years. The school received a DfEE achievement award for improvement in the national tests. In the 2000 tests the school achieved its target set for the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 in English and mathematics. While the proportion of pupils achieving level 4 was well below the national average, given pupils' prior levels of attainment the targets themselves were appropriate. Girls generally do better than boys in tests at both key stages, except in science at Key Stage 2. Inspection evidence shows no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.
4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. At both key stages they receive good support in literacy and numeracy lessons from teachers and other adults to achieve standards in line with their ability and aptitude. In the Foundation Stage where the children with special educational needs are supported in their group work, they make good progress. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress at the Foundation Stage and satisfactory progress at both key stages. There are no pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition and therefore the school judges appropriately that pupils for whom English is an additional language require no specific additional support. Teachers plan to meet the learning needs of these pupils in line with those of other pupils with similar levels of attainment.

5. In English, standards have improved since the last inspection. However, current standards of pupils' work and their literacy skills are still below those expected at the end of both key stages. Pupils bring to school a narrow range of vocabulary. While they listen attentively in lessons, their oral responses are often limited. A minority of seven year olds are successful in extracting information from non-fiction. By the age of eleven, pupils are able to talk about their preferences in books; the majority read accurately, with occasional hesitation. Higher attaining pupils show a good understanding of more complex stories. The number of pupils who achieve the expected level in reading is near the national average. The proportion of pupils at the age of seven who achieve the expected level for their age in writing is below average. Most pupils are not consistent in their use of punctuation and find difficulty spelling words of more than one syllable. Although some higher attaining pupils are beginning to write with a joined-up style, lower attaining pupils have difficulty forming their letters regularly. By the age of eleven, most pupils write neatly, although their handwriting is not always fully joined. Lower attaining pupils use commas and full stops correctly, but their use of other punctuation is limited, and some sentences are incomplete. Higher attaining pupils can use language imaginatively. Pupils write in a range of different forms.
6. In mathematics, pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 although the overall standard of the work seen was below expected levels. The number of pupils performing at the higher levels is below those typically found nationally. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound grasp of number, using addition and subtraction when working within numbers to 100. They have a satisfactory knowledge of measurement, capacity and length, but their experience of constructing graphs for data handling is more limited. Pupils do not make sufficient progress at Key Stage 2 because of shortcomings in teaching and standards remain below the national average. The grouping of pupils by ability for lessons is not fully effective because teachers do not always plan work within these groups to match differing learning needs.
7. In science, pupils are achieving well and standards are rising because of improvements in teaching and planning and the effective leadership of the co-ordinator. Pupils are achieving standards close to the national average at Key Stage 1. Pupils understand what is a fair test, conduct experiments and make scientific observations which they record in drawings, charts and captions. They have sound scientific knowledge and understanding. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are confident to undertake a wide range of experiments. They record these carefully and methodically, using diagrams to illustrate their work. They make predictions and draw conclusions from their findings. However, at the upper end of Key Stage 2 there are gaps to be made up in the knowledge pupils have previously acquired, and at both key stages there is insufficient attention given to providing work which helps the more able pupils achieve at a higher level.
8. Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection and are broadly in line with those typically found by the end of both key stages. Improved provision, in particular regular access to a computer room, enables pupils to make satisfactory progress. By the age of seven, pupils show appropriate levels of competence in their use of computers. They have acquired simple word-processing skills, successfully use a graphics package, have a sound knowledge of how to control the movement of objects by giving commands, appreciate the need to organise data and are beginning to use ICT to represent information graphically. At Key Stage 2, pupils reach appropriate standards in word-processing skills. They can access information from a hard disk, CD-ROMs and the Internet.

Most pupils can use a multimedia program to organise and present a set of linked pages that incorporate pictures, images, sound and text. Pupils in one Year 5/6 class achieve good standards in developing a multimedia presentation because of the specific expertise of their teacher. Pupils' presentations show good imagination, awareness of different audiences and application of skills.

9. Standards of work in art and design of pupils aged seven and eleven are above those expected for their ages. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. Pupils work in a wide range of media, and their achievements are promoted by good teaching, well supported by the expertise of a classroom assistant. In all of the activities, pupils show a good sense of shape, pattern and colour. Pupils in Year 6 produce good observational drawings and very good, atmospheric 'mood' paintings using watercolours.
10. Standards in design and technology and music are similar to those typically found nationally at both key stages. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection in both subjects at Key Stage 2. Pupils make satisfactory progress in physical education. Standards are as expected nationally at both key stages and are similar to those seen in the previous inspection, with an improvement in the standards of swimming.
11. There has been little development of geography and religious education since the last inspection. Standards at Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with expected levels, though standards at Key Stage 2 are below expected levels. Judgements are similar to those made at the time of the last inspection in geography but represent a fall in standards in religious education at Key Stage 2. In history, standards at Key Stage 2 are in line with national expectations but are lower at Key Stage 1. This represents a decline at Key Stage 1 since the previous inspection. Pupils often underachieve in these subjects because insufficient work is being covered at an appropriate depth, and the range and quality of pupils' written work is often unsatisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils' attitudes and their involvement with their work are good. The parents' questionnaire indicated that children enjoy coming to school and this was reinforced by conversations with pupils. For example, one boy bringing a caterpillar to school was eager to explain the class project to an inspector at the gate. In class, pupils settle down to work very quickly and display good interest in their work. They respond well to the tasks and work responsibly together at practical activities, for example, in science and design and technology lessons. Year 1 pupils take a pride in their work and were keen to display their sculptures of butterflies. Children in the nursery arrive happily in the morning, clearly know the routines and settle attentively with one of the adults. Pupils in the gardening club are rightly proud of their contribution to the school's environment. Pupils who attend breakfast club talk enthusiastically about their ICT work. In assemblies, pupils listen carefully and appreciate the achievements of others.
13. Behaviour is uniformly good and often very good. This is a significant improvement on the previous report and a great credit to the effective implementation of the behaviour policy. Rebukes from teachers are rare and tend to relate to inattention rather than to behaviour which is likely to disrupt other pupils. As a consequence, the atmosphere in

class is now conducive to good teaching and learning. Behaviour at playtime and at the beginning and end of the school day is very good. The calm way that pupils walk to and from school ensures a good road safety record and gives a very good impression to passers-by. There have been no exclusions in the past year which is a considerable improvement from the last report when the number of reported exclusions was 16.

14. Pupils' personal development and relationships in the school are good. Pupils report that there is virtually no bullying and while there is a small amount of 'ragging' at playtime this is done with good humour and no signs of malice. Pupils show a good respect for each other and understand the need for people to be able to express their point of view without this being taken as combative. This was especially evident in circle time when pupils were given the time and space to make their points. Relationships are good. Pupils get on well with each other and are prepared to give assistance without prompting. This was particularly evident in the Foundation Stage where pupils helped each other to dress and undress for physical education. Pupils are polite to one another and towards teachers and other adults. They are able to maintain friendly yet respectful relationships with adults and show appreciation of what is done for them. Pupils with special educational needs relate well to those who support them, and mainly try hard to achieve. They work well in groups with adults and their peers. Pupils mainly respond well to strategies for the modification of their behaviour. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are happy and settled.
15. Pupils' attitudes to questions such as racism are refreshing. Racial differences are treated at the same level as differences in height or tastes in food, and friendship groups transcend both race and age as evidenced in the 'buddy system' whereby Year 6 pupils provide help and role models to those in the younger age groups.
16. In most classes, pupils volunteer for tasks such as keeping the books in order or tidying the classroom, and they perform their jobs conscientiously. In science lessons, pupils show independence and work well in groups to organise themselves and carrying out activities and are very aware of safety procedures. They take more formal responsibilities as prefects and monitors very seriously and see them as implying an obligation towards setting a good example to other pupils.
17. Attendance at 92.2% in 1999/2000 is not satisfactory. In recent months there has been a small, steady improvement attributable to the link worker, and for the current term has reached 93.23%. The school does not accept lame excuses from parents and this has resulted in a very high level of unauthorised absence. In 1999/2000 this was 3.3%, which would place the school in the worst 1.5% of primary schools in the country. There has been a dramatic improvement in this figure as a result of effective follow up by the link worker and it is running at 0.8% in the current term. Registers are kept using a computer-based recording system which fully meets statutory requirements. Punctuality is satisfactory and any occasional lateness has virtually no impact on the start of lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. During the inspection 71 lessons or parts of lessons were seen. Teaching was judged to be very good in 11 per cent of lessons, good in 42 per cent, satisfactory in another 42 per cent and unsatisfactory in

four per cent. The quality of teaching shows a steady improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was unsatisfactory in 19 per cent of lessons. There has been substantial improvement in teaching at the Foundation Stage since the last inspection where teaching is now good. Teaching at Key Stage 1 shows a steady improvement and all lessons seen were at least satisfactory. At Key Stage 2, some of the inconsistencies in the quality of teaching observed at the last inspection remain. While 45 per cent of lessons observed were good or better, eight per cent were unsatisfactory.

19. The quality of teaching and learning in both nursery and reception classes is good, and effective assistance from the support assistants has a very positive impact on children's learning. Teachers have mainly high expectations of what children can achieve, provision is good and stimulating, and lessons move along at a good pace. Children are managed well, and adults have clear expectations for their behaviour. Teachers and other adults ask well-focused questions to develop the children's thinking and assess their learning. The adults encourage the children to become independent and to take responsibility. This leads to the children becoming confident and able to make decisions. Teaching of literacy is good. The teacher in the nursery provides well for the development of literacy skills, and elements of the literacy framework are well used in both reception classes. All adults are effectively employed to help develop speaking and listening skills. Teaching of numeracy skills is good. There are many opportunities for children to develop mathematical awareness and all adults help children's mathematical development move along well. The daily numeracy sessions in the reception classes are effective because the opening activities of the lesson are lively and engage children well and there is a good sense of challenge.
20. Teaching is satisfactory at both Key Stage 1 and 2, though the quality of teaching is better and more consistent at Key Stage 1. All teachers are competent in teaching the basic skills of numeracy and literacy. Teaching of English is satisfactory at both key stages. Teaching of mathematics is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Teaching of science and art and design is good. Teaching of geography and religious education is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2 because the amount of written work produced is of insufficient depth to promote effective learning.
21. At Key Stage 1 teaching methods are sound. Lessons are well organised and prepared. Teachers are confident and their delivery style generally holds pupils' interest. All lessons are conducted at least at a satisfactory pace. Learning objectives are clearly introduced, though not always referred to during the course of the lesson. Lessons are purposeful. For example, in a good art and design lesson in Year 1, where the class were making their wind sculptures of butterflies, the teacher explained each stage carefully and, working closely with the classroom assistant, made sure that all pupils knew what to do before they were allowed to proceed. As a result, pupils had a good understanding of the process and achieved well.
22. At Key Stage 2, the quality of pupils' learning, the progress they make and the standards they achieve are still very much dependent upon the effectiveness of individual teacher's methods.

In a very good science lesson the teacher very effectively questioned and tested pupils' prior knowledge of circuits and reviewed the stages in experiments. Pupils then showed good independence in organising equipment and resources and working together to complete the experiment within a given timeframe. In instances where teaching was unsatisfactory, it was because the organisation of pupils had not been thought out sufficiently and they were not given enough to do during the lesson. For

example, in a design and technology lesson, where pupils were evaluating types of bread, the learning was unsatisfactory and pupils made little progress because the pace was slow as pupils waited patiently for their turn to taste the bread. Not all teachers use an appropriate range of teaching methods to explain geographical ideas, relying too much on verbal explanations. In one lesson the teacher provided newspaper cuttings on floods but gave insufficient guidance on how to analyse the information so that pupils were reading without clear purpose. Some teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of their pupils.

23. The last inspection noted that the school's aim of promoting positive relationships was inconsistently applied in some classes. The school has very successfully addressed the key issue on ensuring positive approaches to behaviour and relationships. Throughout the school there is now clear consistency in the management of pupils in lessons. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and pupils respond well to teachers' expectations of their behaviour. There is a positive ethos for learning in all classes and teachers show good care for pupils and respect their interests and opinions. So, pupils feel able to ask questions and are encouraged to try things for themselves. Teachers have high expectations of how pupils will behave in lessons and give good encouragement to pupils for their efforts.
24. Teachers' subject knowledge has improved since the last inspection, and in most lessons the teachers show sound understanding of the subjects they teach. In subjects where teaching was in need of development during the last inspection, such as information and communication technology and English, teachers are satisfactorily developing their skills and knowledge and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, not all teachers are yet confident in teaching ICT skills. For example, in one instance, the teacher's insecure subject knowledge was evident in her inability to give pupils a clear sense of the purpose of the lesson. In consequence, pupils rushed through tasks without appropriate guidance and failed to make satisfactory progress. In contrast, in another lesson, pupils achieved well because the teacher could explain clearly to pupils the advanced features of the program and help them refine their work. In science, teachers demonstrate good expertise in developing pupils' investigative skills. Likewise in art and design, teachers' good understanding of the subject helps promote good standards and learning and enables them to make good links with other subjects such as science and history.
25. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy and structure their lessons in line with the recommendations. However, in numeracy, not all teachers manage the timing of three-part lesson structure well. Frequently introductions are over-long and this curtails the time available for the important lesson summary. Teachers have a sound understanding of how to teach basic literacy skills. Teaching of numeracy skills is broadly satisfactory but in some classes there is insufficient development of pupils' ability to do mental calculations quickly and to use various mental strategies. Teachers do not always extend pupils' skills effectively through requiring them to explain their working-out methods.
26. There are specific weaknesses within teachers' planning at both key stages. In most foundation subjects learning objectives are not focused tightly enough, so activities do not always help pupils move on sufficiently in their learning. As pupils are taught in some mixed-age classes, Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4, and Years 5 and 6 are being taught similar topics, and teachers share the same planning. However, the work planned is not always well matched to some pupils' learning needs and activities are insufficiently developed to ensure that older pupils undertake harder work. In

particular, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. In Key Stage 2, where classes are organised by ability groups for English and mathematics, teachers do not always provide sufficiently for the different levels of attainment within each group.

27. There is good support for low attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers work closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator and learning support assistants to promote these pupils' learning. The school has a generous number of learning support assistants, including some funded through the Education Action Zone project. Their efforts are carefully targeted on specific groups identified by the school. They are well trained and briefed and offer good support. Where the special educational needs co-ordinator works in the class, the support is well planned. There are a significant number of pupils who need help to modify their behaviour so that they can benefit from lessons, and teachers manage these pupils consistently well and help them settle to their learning. They have a good awareness of the social, behavioural and emotional needs that the pupils may have.
28. Teachers make satisfactory use of homework to extend pupils' learning, and parents' concerns are not justified. Ongoing assessment practices in lessons are satisfactory, but the use of marking to inform pupils how to improve is inconsistent. In a few lessons, introductory sessions are too long and, while pupils are well behaved and appear to be listening, their concentration wanders at times. In some lessons, teachers talk for too long, not sufficiently involving pupils in general discussion. Some teachers overuse worksheets. Not all teachers share the objective of the lesson with pupils, for example in music lessons, so that pupils do not fully understand why they are doing a particular task. Teaching and learning of ICT skills in classrooms are not effective as teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support learning in other subjects.

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

29. Children in the Foundation Stage have a stimulating and very well organised curriculum that has a positive impact on their learning. The curriculum follows national guidance for their age group. The learning opportunities across the areas of learning for children of this age are broad and balanced, with specific strengths to be found in each, especially in mathematical development and physical development. There are good links between the curriculum for the nursery and the two reception classes, so that children make good progress as they move through the Foundation Stage. The planning is based on the early learning goals, but not so well linked with the attainment targets for Key Stage 1. Provision for the more able pupils who are exceeding the early learning goals is not as effectively managed, because they are not challenged enough.
30. The school now meets its legal requirements to teach all the subjects of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education, an improvement since the previous inspection when elements of the music and design and technology curriculum were not covered. The quality and range of the curriculum offered are sufficiently broad and balanced and presented in a manner which has relevance to all the pupils. Art is a particular strength in the curriculum, and displayed work has a positive impact in many of the common areas of the school. Provision in ICT and science has improved since the last inspection. However, there are shortcomings in

the quality of learning experiences in history at Key Stage 1 and in religious education and geography at Key Stage 2. In history and geography, pupils do not cover topics in sufficient depth and there is a lack of systematic development of skills. In religious education, insufficient attention is given to developing the pupils' understanding of other religions. Sex education and drugs awareness are both appropriately taught, and are incorporated into the well-organised personal, social and health education programme. This successfully promotes pupils' personal development in a number of areas and has had a very significant impact on pupils' behaviour. Aspects of health, safety and hygiene are reinforced well in other areas of the curriculum such as in science, physical education and design and technology.

31. The school's total amount of teaching time is broadly in line with the national recommendations. However, the over-running of assemblies means that pupils can lose up to ten minutes a day of lesson time. Literacy and numeracy have high priority and the time given to English and mathematics is generous. This is appropriate. The school has satisfactorily adopted and implemented the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. Their introduction is having a positive impact on the standards achieved in these two subjects. However, not all teachers at Key Stage 2 manage the timing of the three-part lesson structure well in numeracy. The timetable has recently been restructured but still requires some adjustment to ensure all lessons are of an appropriate length. For example, in physical education there is often insufficient time for pupils to practise and develop their skills.
32. There are policy documents for all subjects and each is planned to the requirements of the new National Curriculum. The school has decided to adopt the nationally recommended guidance materials for science and for all of the foundation subjects, except for physical education, and to use these as the basis for its planning. In most subjects this is a very recent decision. The issues in the medium-term planning, identified in the previous inspection, have not been fully addressed. The new materials are not yet customised in order to accommodate the school's structure of linking two year groups together in a two-yearly planning cycle. Clear learning objectives and skills appropriate to each year group are yet to be fully defined and recorded. Effective cross-curricular links have been made in art and science, and in science and design technology and this process should be further developed to provide cohesion for pupils' learning and to make best use of the time available. There is insufficient use of ICT and literacy skills to support learning in other areas of the curriculum.
33. The curriculum in the school is significantly enriched by clubs and a wide range of school visits. There are day visits for pupils of all ages, covering most areas of the curriculum, each selected to enrich and extend learning. Currently there are clubs for gymnastics, football and recorders, and a school choir. There is an active gardening club, and members are proud of their contribution to the school's environment.

A recent innovation is a breakfast club, which also provides opportunity for pupils to develop their ICT skills. Out-of-hours learning was provided for Year 6 pupils in English, mathematics and science. Special educational needs pupils have additional support each lunchtime using ICT to develop basic skills. Clubs are open to all pupils in Key Stage 2.

34. There are good links with the community. Links with the church are strong, reflecting the school's Christian ethos. Members of the church are involved with assemblies and they invite the school's choir to perform at Christmas festivals. Local businesses support the school in a number of ways. A recent prominent exhibition of pupils' art indicates the recognition of the school's work by the community. There are limited

connections with the wider culturally diverse community. The Education Action Zone has established support for reading, particularly by providing boys with role models. Other visitors to the school make a significant contribution to the wider curriculum such as musicians playing Elizabethan music for pupils studying the Tudors, and coaches for sports and for instrumental tuition.

35. The school has established good constructive partnerships with other schools. It is regularly involved in Dudley schools' sporting events and recently participated in a local dance festival. There is an optional residential visit to France for pupils in Year 6, during the Easter holidays, when pupils join with a neighbouring school. The Education Action Zone has established a good partnership with toddler groups before pupils start in the nursery. There are good links developing with the feeder secondary school, including sports links such as rugby coaching. Familiarisation with the secondary school starts when pupils are in Year 5 and continues in Year 6, in order to ease transition for the pupils to the next stage in their education. Special needs staff from the school meet regularly with local colleagues and the school's subject co-ordinators meet with advisors from the local education authority.
36. The school strives to provide equality of opportunity for all pupils. The curriculum is inclusive and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, have appropriate access. However, in the few cases where pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn from class for additional support, this is generally at the same time each week, so that they regularly miss the lessons which the rest of the class is receiving. The staff provide positive role models and have good relationships with their pupils. Pupils' achievements are carefully monitored by attainment, gender and ethnic background. However, the school gives insufficient attention to the needs of the more able pupils and they are not always sufficiently challenged.
37. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Clear procedures are in place and the school closely follows the Code of Conduct on the identification and assessment of pupils. Children in the nursery and reception classes are closely monitored so that any special educational needs are identified early in their school career. There are individual education plans for all pupils who are at Stage 2 and above on the register of special needs. These set clear targets for pupils to which learning strategies are linked. Currently the targets identified are mainly linked to the development of literacy. Targets for the development of mathematical skills and for emotional and behavioural needs are not yet so clearly identified. Pupils at Stage 5 on the special needs register are provided with good support in line with the requirements in their statements. The provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory.
38. The curriculum provision for personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects is good. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. The school has developed its own policy that has been used to establish a clear set of values and a positive ethos, which is driving many improvements in school life. This is evidenced by a significant improvement in behaviour, attitudes and relationships since the last report and has established a classroom environment within which good teaching results in good learning and an improvement in standards.
39. The provision for spiritual development is good. Assemblies meet statutory requirements and have a clear spiritual theme. Spiritual matters are well covered in personal and social education and religious education lessons, and are reflected by pupils in conversation. In a religious education lesson on the theme of the Prodigal

Son, pupils responded with deep sympathetic feelings to the situation of the characters. For instance, at one point a pupil exclaimed "sad, so sad!" Activities such as the gardening club and the Caterpillar project, provide ample opportunities for pupils to experience the wonders of nature and a sense of awe and wonder. Displays of pupils' art throughout the school show that they understand deeper significance than the images themselves convey. This was brought out even more strongly in the reaction of several pupils to the seascape murals in the junior toilets. They all feel the murals convey far more meaning than is immediately apparent and have a remarkable calming effect. They are keen to see similar murals in other parts of the school.

40. The provision for moral development is very good. Pupils are given a very clear sense of right and wrong which acts as a binding force for the school as a whole. Pupils demonstrate, in class discussions, that they are keenly aware of moral dilemmas and can understand why people make the choices they do. In a number of situations they display a remarkably mature perception of human fallibility, which they use to guide their own lives and to make allowances for others with understanding rather than condemnation.
41. Social development is good. The behaviour policy has set standards and guidelines for social interaction which pupils build upon in forming their own relationships. Particularly noticeable is the good-humoured way in which they engage with each other and with adults. Pupils are prepared to accept responsibilities and are conscientious in their performance. By the time they reach Year 6 they have developed into mature young people able to do well in life.
42. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are given a good sense of their own local culture through local visits and study. However, opportunities to sample and experience other cultures are severely limited. In an assembly which had a distinctly Chinese theme and at which Chinese music was played, no reference was made to the cultural aspects and a great opportunity was missed. The reaction of the pupils to a visit to a Hindu temple was very positive and they gained a lot from the visit, although the visit was opposed by several parents. One of the effects of pupils' positive attitudes towards race issues is that they often fail to take advantage of the opportunity to understand different cultures by their non-recognition of the differences. On balance this is a positive feature of the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. The provision for child protection and children's welfare is good. The deputy headteacher is the nominated child protection officer, and both she and the headteacher have had appropriate training and are well supported by other statutory authorities. The school provides an exceptionally well-maintained and safe environment and everyone takes security seriously. The caretaker does a great deal both to ensure the children have a sense of well being and security while at school, and to enrich their lives through the provision of flowers and his work with the gardening club. The grounds lack adequate shade although there are plans to remedy this. There are no water fountains accessible to children at play. Medical arrangements are satisfactory. The health and safety policy needs updating, although practice is very good, for example in design and technology lessons where the proper handling of scissors and needles is stressed.

44. The educational and personal support provided to pupils is good, with some very good features. The school is part of an Education Action Zone and has used the extra resources that this provides to very good effect. One of the key benefits has been the funding of a link worker whose efforts have improved both attendance and the confidence of many parents in providing their children with support.
45. Attendance procedures are now good, following a period when newly acquired ICT software failed to work properly and hence failed to provide the school with adequate information about attendance. This has now been remedied and the systems that have been put in place enable the link worker to follow up non-attendance within an hour or so of registration closing. Many parents have commented how appreciative they are that the school provides such a high level of concern.
46. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. They were developed in consultation with all staff who provide a consistent approach to behaviour management. The result has been a very significant improvement in behaviour over the past four years. This improvement has in turn had a very positive effect on the ethos of the school, producing a better climate for learning.
47. The procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour and supporting personal development are good. Pupils develop good ethical and moral standards and these are reinforced by good role models provided by all staff and by older pupils towards the younger ones.
48. There are appropriate aims for the support of pupils with special educational needs and a positive ethos in place to provide for their needs. Targets in the individual education plans are regularly reviewed. There are consistent procedures to inform teaching assistants of the objectives, and good liaison between teachers and teaching assistants as well as regular weekly meetings with the special educational needs co-ordinator. The school works hard to meet the range of pupils' special needs and provides well for their educational and behavioural needs. There are good strategies to support pupils' social and emotional development. There is regular support for pupils from the local education authority's Educational Psychology Service. Support for the pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory.
49. The school has satisfactory systems for assessing pupils' academic progress. Baseline assessments are carried out on entry to the reception year and statutory assessments at the end of both the key stages. From these assessments the school makes predictions as to the likely standards of attainment for each pupil at the end of both key stages. The school then sets end of year targets for each pupil for English and mathematics. Pupils' progress in these subjects is tracked throughout the school using intermediary assessments to monitor pupils' progress. In English, mathematics and science there are end of year assessments against sets of key learning statements. Although these provide an ongoing record of pupils' progress, the systems need to be updated because the learning statements in English and mathematics relate to the pre-2000 National Curriculum. In addition, class teachers maintain detailed class records. There are ongoing pupil profiles which contain copies of their annual report and records containing samples of their work as they progress through the school. Since the last inspection the school has developed a good marking policy, but it is not implemented consistently. Assessment procedures in ICT are inadequate. Informal assessments provide teachers with a sound understanding of what pupils understand and can do but there are no whole-school systems to monitor

pupils' progress over time. However, the school has made a sound start in developing assessment and recording systems for ICT, design and technology and history, for implementation in September 2001.

50. Some effective use is made of the information gathered from assessments. The best use of this assessment data is in the Foundation Stage where it is regularly used to ensure that the needs of all the children are met. These children have their learning carefully monitored and recorded. Pupils at Key Stage 2 are organised into teaching groups for English, mathematics and science on the basis of assessments. The headteacher analyses all the results of standardised assessments and uses this information to make decisions on school priorities, such as the recent focus on developing writing skills. Lower attaining pupils identified as not making the expected rate of progress are provided with additional support. The school also monitors pupils' progress by gender and by ethnicity, although the progress of higher attaining pupils is less closely monitored. However, overall the use and evaluation of assessment data and its impact on the work of the school is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient use of assessment to inform curriculum planning and modify teaching plans. Teachers do not translate pupils' end of year targets into specific learning targets and use these to focus their teaching and to push up standards. Subject co-ordinators are not sufficiently involved with the process of analysing assessment data so that they can monitor standards and implement changes.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. The school works hard to improve its relations with parents, and its partnership with them has improved since the last inspection. The majority of parents have a positive view of the school and are well satisfied with their children's progress and all the other matters the school does for them. There is a certain amount of indifference on the part of a minority of parents which the school is actively addressing. Parents are confident that they can approach the headteacher and all staff with problems and that the school will do all it can to address the problems.
52. The quality of information provided to parents is good. The prospectus is well written and informative as are governors' annual reports; both fulfil statutory requirements. The school goes to considerable lengths to keep parents informed through newsletters, personal contacts and projects organised as a result of the Education Action Zone. Annual reports are informative about pupils' progress but do not indicate clear academic targets; these are discussed at parents' evenings, which are well attended. The overall effectiveness of the links with parents is, however, only satisfactory on account of the lack of response by many parents, despite the best efforts of the school. The Friends of St Marks which has only recently been re-established, does much good work in providing social occasions for the children, raising money for the school and providing each pupil with a present when they leave the school. They have plans to provide more social occasions for parents.
53. The role of the learning link worker, funded by the Education Action Zone, in forging links with parents and the community is effective and the school will endeavour to retain her services when the Education Action Zone project comes to an end. She establishes links with parents in a very co-operative and non-threatening way, working with parents of children who are not yet old enough to enter the nursery, with parents who lack confidence and social skills, and with parents of children who are poor attenders. As a result, attendance is improving, children who enter nursery are better equipped with basic skills and many parents are better equipped to help their children at home. A strong element of the nursery provision is the encouragement given to

parents to be partners in their children's learning through supporting the development of their children's reading.

54. Where parents take an active involvement in their children's education, their impact is good. A small number, around 10-12, play a significant role in acting as classroom assistants, and a larger pool of parents assist with school trips, through the Friends and as governors. There is, however, a very wide variation between those that give their children and the school their full support and those that are indifferent to the school. Liaison with parents of pupils with special educational needs is good. Parents are made aware of the targets set in the individual education plans and invited to help their children to meet them. Parents are involved in the regular review procedure. There are appropriate procedures in place to involve parents of children with a statement of educational need.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. She has a clear vision for the school and what she wants to achieve. She is held in high regard by staff, pupils and parents. Since she took over the position, just before the last inspection, there has been significant improvement in the behaviour of pupils and their relationships with one another, good improvement in provision for pupils' personal development, good improvement in provision at the Foundation Stage and a steady improvement in relationships with parents, the curriculum, the quality of teaching and in the standards achieved by pupils. The improvement in standards has resulted in a DfEE school achievement award. However, the leadership roles of other managers in the school have yet to be developed fully.
56. The school has a clear set of values and a positive ethos, which are driving many improvements in school life. The aims of the school are reflected well in its work. The school successfully encourages good relationships, and the headteacher, supported well by the teaching and non-teaching staff, has acted firmly to improve standards of behaviour. The school has worked hard to eliminate any signs of bullying or racism and encourage a respect for all cultures. It provides good opportunities for all pupils, regardless of their background, for instance in the range of extra-curricular visits and trips. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the need to continue to work to provide a balanced curriculum and for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.
57. Management structures within the school are satisfactory. The headteacher is soundly supported by the senior management team of deputy headteacher and key stage managers. Together they ensure that the school is focused on the right priorities and that there are effective systems to ensure the smooth running of the school. In general, there are appropriate levels of delegation of responsibility. The headteacher is working to develop teamwork among the staff by introducing phase co-ordinators, who oversee the work of classes across two-year groups, to ensure that all pupils have appropriate opportunities to learn. The management of the Foundation Stage is good, and has led to improvements in provision and the raising of standards in that area.
58. The management of the curriculum is generally satisfactory and there is sound allocation of subject responsibilities among staff. However, the role of many curriculum co-ordinators is underdeveloped and their effectiveness variable. The management of science is very good and of information and communication technology is good; the co-ordinators of these subjects have a clear view of the action necessary to raise and maintain standards. The co-ordinator for art and design has ensured that the subject has a high profile. The co-ordinators for English and mathematics are not effective in

their roles, although the deputy headteacher ensures that management of English is satisfactory. The management of other subjects is sound, although co-ordinators do not draw up action plans for developments in their subjects. The special educational needs co-ordinator is experienced and knowledgeable, and manages the support very well. Good and relevant training is provided for the learning support assistants. There are good and well-established relationships with outside agencies, such as the Learning Support Service, Speech and Language Service and the educational psychologists. A member of the governing body takes responsibility for special educational needs. The school manages the needs of the few pupils for whom English is an additional language satisfactorily.

59. Although the school has clear measures for monitoring standards, the role of the subject co-ordinators in this process has not been sufficiently developed. The headteacher is good at analysing assessment data and has a good understanding of how to use this data in monitoring standards. She and the deputy headteacher are beginning to share information with the two key stage managers, but subject co-ordinators are not sufficiently involved in the analysis of data, particularly in the key areas of literacy and numeracy.
60. Procedures for monitoring teaching are satisfactory. The school has a clearly set-out programme of monitoring the quality of teaching. The headteacher observes teachers on a regular basis, giving them both verbal and written feedback, and this has led to an improvement in the overall quality of teaching since the last inspection. The monitoring role is not, however, shared sufficiently with the other members of the school's management team, the deputy headteacher or the key stage managers. The school has implemented the requirements for performance management both for the headteacher and other teachers satisfactorily; objectives have been agreed for all the teachers and the headteacher.
61. The governing body meets all of its legal requirements and its members work hard on its range of committees. Governors are known by staff and parents. They are involved appropriately in the planning for the school's development and often attend staff training.

They have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the improvements which have been made since the last inspection. Governors have specific links with the subject co-ordinators for English, mathematics and information and communication technology, and have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in these areas.

62. The school has a good plan for improvement, which has focused appropriately on the key areas of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. The headteacher shares her vision with all the staff, and all staff and representatives of the governing body are involved in drawing up the school improvement plan during staff training days.
63. The day-to-day management of finances is carried out efficiently by the office manager, and this was confirmed by the latest report from the auditors. The main recommendation to improve the school's inventories has been acted upon, with computerised inventories being drawn up by the site manager. The governors have a sound understanding of the school's finances and have succeeded in reducing the deficit in the school's budget without compromising its efforts to raise standards. Funds specifically designated for pupils with special educational needs are used well to provide support for these pupils and the additional funding from the Educational

Action Zone also provides further effective support for pupils. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

64. The school uses new technology satisfactorily. It is used well in administration, for instance for the school's registers and in the drawing up of individual educational plans for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers use computers well in the computer suite but they are not used fully in the classroom to enhance pupils' learning. The information the school derives from its assessment of pupils' progress is not yet processed by computer.
65. The school has a sufficient number of appropriately qualified teachers to teach all the subjects to all classes. There is a good number of qualified support staff, including some who were originally volunteers but are now funded by the Education Action Zone to which the school belongs. The school has satisfactory procedures for the induction of newly qualified teachers and of staff new to the school, in which the phase co-ordinators will now play a part. At present the school does not provide opportunities for the training of new teachers; this is appropriate in the light of the school's decision to focus on improving its own teaching. Staff training is linked well to the needs of the school. The emphasis the school has placed on staff development has enabled it to achieve Investors in People status.
66. The accommodation is, overall, good although some of the teaching areas are a little cramped. A specialist ICT suite is available although some teachers do not plan the logistics of their lessons to suit the arrangement of the computers; for example it is generally not sensible to try to hold a plenary session with most of the pupils having their back to the teacher and tempted to play with the computer.
67. Resources are good for physical education and ICT and adequate in all other subjects except history. Generally teachers make satisfactory use of the resources available although in English and mathematics the resources tend to be underused. For example, the library is very underused and the limitations on borrowing books are unnecessary. The computers in the classrooms are not used effectively. Particularly good use is made of resources in art and design and the art gallery that is being set up is appreciated by the whole school community.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. In order to make further improvements to it's effectiveness, the school should:
 - 1) Continue efforts to improve standards in English by:
 - matching work more closely to needs of all pupils but particularly the higher attaining pupils;
 - providing more opportunities for writing across the curriculum and using ICT to draft and redraft written work;
 - planning opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills in lessons;
 - developing the role of the subject co-ordinator in monitoring standards and provision.
 - (paragraphs 96,101,102)
 - 2) Improve the progress that pupils make in mathematics particularly at Key Stage 2 by:
 - developing pupils' mental strategies and use of language in mathematics;
 - establishing measures for developing individual learning targets for pupils;
 - making better use of ICT to support pupils' learning;

- developing the role of the subject co-ordinator in monitoring standards and provision.
 - (paragraphs 109,111)
- 3) Improve the quality of teaching, particularly at Key Stage 2 by:
- ensuring activities in all lessons take full account of the needs of the more able pupils;
 - ensuring learning objectives are planned more precisely and shared with pupils;
 - using the existing expertise within the school to support colleagues where their subject competence is less secure.
 - (paragraphs 24,26,28)
- 4) Raise pupils' achievements in religious education, history and geography by:
- broadening the range of learning experiences;
 - planning units of work so as to ensure that prior knowledge and skills are built upon.
 - (paragraph 30)
- 5) Improve assessment procedures by:
- updating systems in English and mathematics to take account of National Curriculum 2000 requirements;
 - putting in place whole-school procedures for monitoring and recording pupils' progress in ICT;
 - using the information gained from assessments to set targets for further improvement.
 - (paragraphs 49,50)
69. In addition to the key issues for improvement, the school should consider the following areas for improvement:
- provision of further opportunities to enrich the curriculum by ensuring that it reflects the multi-cultural nature of society (paragraph 42).
 - the use of marking to inform pupils how to improve (paragraph 28).
 - the arrangements for withdrawing pupils with special educational needs from lessons (paragraph 36).
 - arrangements for pupils to change their home reading books and to use the school library (paragraph 97).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	71
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	55

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	42	42	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	29	289
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		71

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	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	21	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	8	12
	Girls	19	18	15
	Total	31	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	66 (69)	55 (72)	57 (87)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	12	12
	Girls	20	15	16
	Total	33	27	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (72)	57 (85)	60 (95)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

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

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	10	16
	Girls	12	10	13
	Total	20	20	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (47)	53 (44)	76 (44)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	11	17
	Girls	14	13	13
	Total	23	24	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (40)	63 (53)	79 (47)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	0
White	235
Any other minority ethnic group	6

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	22.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	148

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	29

Number of pupils per FTE adult	29
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	586764
Total expenditure	602824
Expenditure per pupil	1967
Balance brought forward from previous year	42009
Balance carried forward to next year	25949

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	246
Number of questionnaires returned	182

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46	47	7	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	52	43	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	48	4	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	47	15	4	3
The teaching is good.	55	41	2	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	45	7	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	31	4	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	34	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	45	46	8	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	59	35	2	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	45	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	41	7	2	10

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

70. There has been a good improvement in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection, so that the majority of children are now achieving well and are likely to attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. This is due to good teaching in these areas of learning. In mathematical development the teaching is good and the oldest and most able children are likely to exceed the goals. Many of the children have weak language and literacy skills when they start in the nursery. The provision for the development of communication, language and literacy is mainly good. However, while the oldest and most able children are likely to attain the early learning goals, the majority are unlikely to. The quality of teaching and good support from the support assistants has a very positive impact on children's learning. Teachers have mainly high expectations of what children can achieve, provision is good and stimulating, and lessons move along at a good pace.
71. Children enter the nursery when they are three years old; those whose birthdays fall between September and February enter in September, and the others enter in January. Currently there are 57 children attending the nursery part time. Initial assessment of children on entry to the nursery provides evidence that the majority of children enter with skills well below the expected standard. Currently there are 38 children attending full time in the two reception classes. Baseline assessments indicate that on entry to the reception classes, children's attainment is below that found in the local authority, especially in the areas of personal, emotional and social development, mathematics and communication, language and literacy.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. The majority of children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area. This is because the adults provide very good role models and have high and consistent expectations of the children's conduct. The nursery provides a calm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere in which children are respected and feel secure. Routines are well established and the children develop good relationships with each other and with the adults who help them. The reception teachers build on these positive attitudes so that by the end of the reception year, the majority of children behave well and are developing their independence.
73. The provision of the freely-chosen activities in the nursery is well thought out, so that children are encouraged to be independent, and to work and play together well. There are suitable quiet moments, such as at the end of the sessions, when children can reflect on what they have learned and share this with the adults and other children. In the reception classes, children concentrate well for an extended length of time, and try hard with their work. They help to tidy up and put away equipment.
74. Teaching in this area is good. Children are managed well, and adults have clear expectations for their behaviour. The adults encourage children to become independent and to take responsibility. This leads to children becoming confident and able to make decisions. Children are positively encouraged to co-operate with each other through good social occasions, such as the morning snack time in the nursery and reception. They are encouraged to play well together.

This is a very good aspect of the nursery provision, where, for example, the teacher uses a parachute game in which all children have to work together to move the ball across the parachute. There are good opportunities for the reception children to attend collective worship, where they are attentive and involved, and to participate in school productions, such as the Christmas play.

Communication, language and literacy

75. Many children enter the nursery with weak communication skills and unclear speech. By the time the children end the reception year, it is likely that a significant number of more able children will attain the early learning goals. Children in the nursery and reception listen well in lessons and the majority are careful to follow instructions. Particular care is taken to ensure that the children with English as an additional language are clear on what is expected of them, and to encourage them to join in.
76. The provision supports literacy effectively. There is a 'Tourist Information Centre' in the nursery where children were observed using the 'office' to 'write' down information, and to use the computer. An attractive display of children's paintings, related to the theme of holidays, is labelled with the children's account of the holiday. There are good examples of children's writing related to the themes; for example, the display on food is accompanied with children's shopping lists. Children learn to recognise their names during registration, when each child selects its name card and places it in the correct slot.
77. The majority of children in the reception classes use drawings and can copy captions or make 'marks' to communicate their ideas. Many children know how to write their names. Older and more able children are beginning to write sentences independently. In one lesson where the children were contributing their ideas to the re-telling of the story of Little Red Hen, the majority of children were able to contribute well thought out sentences and showed a good sense of narrative. All children were encouraged to participate, so that the children with special educational needs were enabled to contribute.
78. Children in the nursery were observed looking at books in the class library. They know how to handle books and how a book is organised. The adults encourage children's reading skills and in discussion, children of all abilities could talk about the illustrations and predict what would happen. Parents are encouraged to be partners in their children's learning through supporting the development of their children's reading. This is a strong element of the nursery provision, where parents have talks with the teacher on ways to support their children at home.
79. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. In the nursery and reception, all adults are effectively employed to help develop speaking and listening skills. Opportunities for adults to talk with children are maximised. For example, the adults who accompanied the children for a walk were all well briefed on what to point out to the children, and stimulated them to talk about their observations. The teacher in the nursery provides well for the development of literacy skills, through the provision of good literacy opportunities, such as the Tourist Information Office, an attractive book area, and displays of children's writing.
80. Elements of the literacy framework are well used in both reception classes. Teachers use this and other occasions for children to hear stories. Teachers pay good attention to children learning their letter sounds. Where the children with special educational needs are supported in their group work, they make good progress. At times, some of the work to be done in the groups does not sufficiently occupy children, and more able children are not always given work which matches their ability.

Children have individual targets for improvement and are all aware of what these are. Many children in the reception classes are already reading scheme books and the more able have skills which exceed the early learning goals.

Mathematical development

81. This area of learning is well provided for, so that it is likely that many of the children will exceed the early learning goals. In the nursery, registration time provides for children to develop counting skills. Children can count how many children are in school and how many absent, and say whether there are more boys than girls. A significant number can count above five. They talk about the size of their sandcastles, and can decide if the bucket will take more sand. Children can sort and classify objects, make patterns by threading beads and using different coloured construction bricks.
82. The daily numeracy session in the reception classes provides many good opportunities for children to develop their mathematical knowledge and skills. Children in the younger class can count up to and down from 20, while the more able pupils in the older class can count to 100, and can count backwards from numbers between 20 and 50. They can describe the position of objects on a grid, and learn to use words, such as 'above', 'below', 'in the middle' and 'left' and 'right' correctly. They know shapes, and can talk about the "triangle under the circle", for example. They produce graphs of their favourite food using pictograms, tally charts, and computer-generated graphs. In the older class, the more able children are able to combine coins to make a total sum. Children in both classes play in the shop role-play area, and buy and sell goods. Learning is reinforced with songs, so that children can provide the actions and show that they understand the vocabulary such as 'behind', 'up' and 'down'.
83. Teaching is good and all adults help children's mathematical development move along well. There are many opportunities for children to develop mathematical awareness through the provision of well thought out activities. Teaching and learning are particularly good in the area of number recognition and counting. In the older reception class, children have targets for counting, and over the week, all children have the opportunity to demonstrate their progress. There is a good sense of challenge in the reception classes, and the opening activities of the lesson are lively and engage children well, with a good attention to reinforcing children's learning and teaching mathematical vocabulary.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

84. Children enter the nursery with a basic understanding of their world, which is well developed through the planned provision. This is built on well in the reception classes, so that it is likely that the majority will achieve the early learning goals. They show an interest in their surroundings on a walk round the local area. They enjoy crunching through the dead leaves and looking at the flowers and trees. They identify the buildings, the shops, the pub, and the different houses. They know the church is old.
85. They learn about food and the changes in materials when they make pizzas with the school cook. They use the school grounds for nature walks and observe plants growing in the school courtyard garden. As they get near to their transfer to the reception, they accompany adults around the school building to get to know the classrooms and offices and what they are used for.
86. Children in the reception use the computer suite for lessons. They know how to use the keyboard and understand how to use the space bar, and a few know how to delete. They can choose pictures from the Clipart program and type in a sentence

about their favourite food. Many of the children work independently, following the teacher's instructions carefully, and help others. Those who have finished can follow instructions to save and print their work, using the cursor and icons.

87. Children can select the appropriate materials to make three-dimensional models of transporters for food, or use construction material to make models. They learn about themselves and the differences between the needs of a baby and their current needs. They know what animals need in order to grow. They know what machines are used in the home and about the weather. They taste and classify food and make a graph.
88. Teaching and provision in the nursery and reception are good. Teachers plan carefully to develop children's knowledge and understanding. Teachers and other adults ask well-focused questions to develop children's thinking and assess their learning. There is good attention to providing for children to extend and develop their knowledge of their environment and to help them talk about their experiences.

Physical development

89. Most children meet the early learning goals in this area. In the reception and nursery they learn how to use pencils, paintbrushes, and to cut and join and stick, and the majority have good control skills. Many children in the nursery already have well developed physical skills. They can run around the play area taking care not to bump into others. They move around in a dance and movement lesson, imitating the movements of animals, and moving in time to the music. In the outside play area they use balls, quoits and beanbags to throw and catch. All the pupils can catch a football thrown to them by the teacher from a distance of three metres. They can roll balls to each other.
90. Children in the reception develop these skills well, so that they can roll and throw balls with increased control. They learn to throw and catch differently sized balls at varied distances. All children use pedalled and wheeled vehicles, and move around safely. All children have good control over the computer mouse.
91. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Opportunities provided are good. Children can develop their physical skills in the hall and in the secure outside play area. There is good equipment outside for children to develop their muscles using climbing equipment and bicycles, tricycles, prams and trolleys. There is satisfactory attention to ensuring children move around safely in a space and to ensure there is a suitable time for warming up and cooling down. There is good encouragement to children and praise for their efforts, and challenge to improve.

Creative development

92. There is a good emphasis on creative development in the reception planning and provision so that it is likely that children will achieve the early learning goals. The children experiment with colour and texture to create paintings. In the nursery they explore a range of media. They model with play dough, and use paint and paper to make a 'green' collage, carefully selecting the materials and shade of green. They make sock puppets, deciding on the materials and name for the puppets, and use them to play imaginatively.
93. In both the nursery and reception classes the role-play areas are good stimulating areas for imaginative play. Children in the reception classes, shop and use money to pay for goods, and one child carefully looks for the bar code on the packages so that she can scan the goods. Children can set up imaginative games, using the train

tracks, construction material, dolls and soft toys. They enjoy singing and can clap and stamp in time to the rhythm of the music.

94. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Creative development is promoted through all areas of learning, as well as specifically focused activities. Adults ensure that there are frequent occasions provided to work with children and help them to develop their ideas. The role-play area is changed to match the classroom topics, so that currently creative play in the reception role-play area is supporting mathematical development and learning about money and giving change. Children's work is valued and their artwork is well displayed, for example in the 'art gallery' in the reception class. During the autumn term, specialised equipment was borrowed from the local education authority's Teacher's Centre – a light box, a mirror box and an open kaleidoscope which children could climb in. Reception and nursery children were able to use this to stimulate their creativity.

ENGLISH

95. Standards of attainment are improving though they are still below expected levels by the end of both key stages.
96. Results in the national tests for eleven year olds for 2000 were well below the national average. When compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils with similar backgrounds, they were also well below average. The percentage of pupils achieving level 4 was well below the national average as was the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels. However, the results of national tests in 2000 showed a good improvement on those of the previous year and the rate of improvement over the last four years is better than the national trend, albeit from a low base. Girls do consistently better in the national tests than boys. Current standards of work of eleven year olds are below those expected for their age, with the proportion of those achieving the expected level below the national average.
97. Results in the national tests for seven year olds in 2000 were well below the national average in reading and very low in writing. Baseline assessments on entry to reception indicate that this was a particularly weak cohort and that their levels of literacy were well below average. Standards of speaking and writing were still low when they entered Year 1, although by then, reading levels had improved. Inspection evidence shows that the current Year 2 pupils are achieving standards close to the national average in their class work. Validated test results at the end of Key Stage 1 for 2001 show a significant improvement in pupils' performance in both reading and writing tests. In reading, the percentages of pupils achieving both level 2 and the higher levels have risen sharply. In writing, the proportion of pupils achieving level 2 has also risen sharply but the percentage of pupils achieving higher levels is still low.
98. Standards of speaking and listening of pupils aged seven are below those expected. Younger pupils bring to school a narrow range of vocabulary and, in some cases, limited experience to stimulate talk and discussion. They listen attentively during literacy sessions but their oral response is often limited. Whilst they are able to follow a sequence of instructions, for example, in a dance lesson their weak vocabulary sometimes hinders their progress.

By the age of eleven, pupils' speaking and listening skills are still below average. Apart from reading, planned opportunities for speaking and discussion are limited, and sometimes teachers do not help by directing the majority of their questions at pupils they know to be more confident.

99. The number of pupils who achieve the expected level in reading is near the national average. When they are reading, the majority of seven year olds are able to recognise punctuation, such as question marks and full stops. They are able to distinguish between fiction and non-fiction but only a minority of pupils are successful in extracting information from non-fiction texts. Pupils are able to say what they like about a book. By the age of eleven, pupils are able to talk about their preferences in books; the majority read accurately, with occasional hesitation. Higher attaining pupils show a good understanding of more complex stories, such as 'The Eagle of the Sixth'. However, pupils' progress would be accelerated if they were able to change their home reading books as soon as they had finished them, instead of once a week as at present, and they were given more opportunities to use the school library.
100. At the age of seven, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level for their age in writing is below average. Most pupils are not consistent in their use of capital letters and full stops, although a small minority of higher attaining pupils are beginning to use commas. Most pupils find difficulty spelling words of more than one syllable. Although some higher attaining pupils are beginning to write with a joined-up style, lower attaining pupils have difficulty forming their letters regularly. By the age of eleven, most pupils write neatly, although their handwriting is not always fully joined. Lower attaining pupils use commas and full stops correctly, but their use of other punctuation is limited, and some sentences are incomplete. Higher attaining pupils can use language imaginatively, using similes such as 'the postman ... whistling like a bird'. Pupils write in a range of different forms, for instance writing a letter of application to the headteacher for a position as prefect or writing instructions for the use of a compact disc player. At the time of the inspection, pupils were in the process of writing a longer story by chapters, but many of them have difficulty when they try to organise their writing for the reader, for instance when converting their partner's responses to a questionnaire about the school into a report.
101. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. It has improved since the last inspection, particularly at Key Stage 2. One weakness in teaching at the last inspection was some teachers' insecure subject knowledge. Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. Their understanding of the subject is often good, and they are able to provide pupils with appropriate guidance, for instance about the use of adverbs in Key Stage 1 or apostrophes in Key Stage 2. They make pupils aware of the need to use contextual clues in reading in Years 3 and 4 or about the influence on the language of American English in Years 5 and 6. Sometimes, however, teachers are not secure in their use of punctuation when scribing writing for a group. Another weakness identified at the last inspection was the slow pace of some lessons. Teachers are implementing the literacy strategy satisfactorily, conduct the three part lesson at least at a satisfactory pace and pupils settle quickly to tasks. Teachers generally prepare lessons well, but do not always share the learning intentions of the lesson with the pupils. Occasionally teachers do not follow up on questions posed by pupils, as for instance in a mixed-age Key Stage 1 class when pupils wanted to find out from a non-fiction text about how penguin chicks learn to waddle! They make satisfactory use of resources, though in one lesson the teacher used a text which was not large enough for all pupils to read in a shared session.
102. Teachers' relationships with pupils are good and they use the school's behaviour policy well to reward good and to deal with inappropriate behaviour. Pupils respond well and their attitudes to learning are good. Pupils in Key Stage 1 participate well in lessons, for instance, enthusiastically offering examples of words which end in '-ear' in Year 2. In Key Stage 2 they maintain their concentration well and co-operate well, for

instance in re-organising the classroom for the different demands of the literacy hour. Teachers make satisfactory use of homework, for instance when pupils in a Years 5 and 6 class are asked to write a range of different beginnings to a story, with a clear time limit set.

103. Lower attaining pupils receive effective support and make good progress to achieve standards in line with their abilities. The school has a good number of classroom assistants and it carefully targets how it uses this valuable resource to support children with special educational needs and other lower attaining pupils. Teachers work well with the learning support staff and closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator to promote these pupils' learning. Where the special educational needs co-ordinator works in the class, the support is well planned. The few pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. At Key Stage 2 classes are divided into ability groups across two year groups. This is generally an effective strategy. For example, in one lower ability Year 3/4 class the teacher made very effective use of individual wipeboards to promote active involvement and all pupils maintained their interest and learnt from their mistakes. However, teachers do not always provide sufficiently for the different levels of attainment within that group or cater sufficiently for those pupils capable of achieving higher standards. Although some teachers organise sessions with their own class for pupils to extend writing skills, opportunities are not taken sufficiently to develop pupils' writing in other areas of the curriculum, such as religious education, history or geography. Teachers make insufficient use of ICT to help pupils in drafting and re-drafting their writing.
104. The subject co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning but is not sufficiently involved in the monitoring of the standards achieved by pupils, for instance by analysing the information from tests, to support teachers in developing their planning to remedy weaknesses in pupils' learning. However, information from tests is used well by senior management to set individual targets for pupils. There has been an improvement in resources since the last inspection, with a greater range of reading texts available to pupils, but there are not frequent enough opportunities for them to change their home reading book or for them to use the school library for them to benefit fully from this facility.

MATHEMATICS

105. Overall standards are rising but attainment is below expected levels by the end of both key stages.
106. Results in the national tests for eleven year olds for 2000 were well below the national average. When compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils with similar backgrounds, they were also well below average. The percentage of pupils achieving level 4 was well below the national average as was the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels. Over the past five years results in the national tests have risen in each successive year, sharply from 1996 to 1998 but less than the national trend of improvement since then.

Pupils are achieving better in tests than at the time of the last inspection and the school has narrowed the gap between its results and those nationally. Girls consistently perform better than boys in the national tests. Current standards of work of eleven year olds are below those expected for their ages, with the proportion of those achieving the expected level below the national average. School targets for end of key stage assessments have risen from last year by five per cent and most pupils

are in line to achieve their targets. Another clear indication of improving standards is the proportion of younger pupils in the top sets in both year bands.

107. Results in the national tests for seven year olds dipped in 2000 and were very low. The percentages of pupils achieving level 2 and at the higher level 3 were very low compared to the national average. Trends over time show an upward picture from 1997 to 1999 and this has continued in the most recent tests as indicated by the validated 2001 standard assessment tasks. During the inspection the work seen in classes and in pupils' books indicates that standards have improved but are still below those typically found nationally because not enough pupils were performing at the higher levels.
108. By the end of Key Stage 2, the higher attaining pupils have a good knowledge of using protractors to measure angles accurately, to draw flat mathematical shapes and from these to make nets and construct solid mathematical models. They recognise relationships between fractions, decimals and percentages. Average attaining pupils round numbers to the nearest hundred and recognise that addition is the inverse of subtraction. The use of brackets, initiated in the younger classes, is under-utilised by older pupils and teachers do not sufficiently emphasise this important aspect of algebraic equations. Less able pupils interpret timetables in their study of time. Pupils in Year 5 study the same curriculum as those in Year 6, and there is little difference in attainment between the two year groups. Younger pupils in the key stage work at slightly below expected levels for their age. They recognise negative numbers in the context of temperature, and are secure in their understanding of using multiplication facts to solve problems such as simple division with a remainder. During the inspection there was little difference noted in the attainment of boys or girls.
109. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a sound grasp of number patterns and simple algebraic equations using addition and subtraction when working within numbers to 100. They approximate to the nearest ten working with numbers less than 50. They have a satisfactory knowledge of measurement, capacity and length but their experience of constructing graphs for data handling is more limited. Younger pupils in the key stage are secure with counting to 20 and know the properties of many basic flat shapes.
110. Teaching is good at Key Stage 1. It is satisfactory at Key Stage 2, with some shortcomings. All teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and soundly plan their lessons. They share the learning objectives of the lesson with their pupils and some teachers have established the good habit of requiring pupils to record these. Teachers include all pupils but tend to give emphasis to supporting pupils with special needs, so that these pupils make good progress. However, work is not sufficiently matched to the needs of the pupils, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Relationships are good and teachers generally manage pupils well and have good control. Pupils' attitudes and responses to mathematics at Key Stage 1 are good. Younger pupils are keen and enthusiastic. Some of the more able older pupils state that it is their favourite subject and these pupils work with concentration and considerable effort.

However, there are a significant number of pupils in Years 3 and 4 who are not attentive, although they do not misbehave and disturb others. In good lessons the pace is brisk, and whenever pupils are provided with challenge pupils concentrate and work hard so that learning is moved forward accordingly. Teachers' marking and the use of assessment to support pupils' learning during lessons are generally satisfactory but this information is not sufficiently and consistently used to plan future teaching. Homework is set regularly in Year 6.

111. There are some shortcomings in the methods used by some teachers. There is no consistent approach among teachers in using specific vocabulary or in actively encouraging pupils to do so. Teachers do not always extend pupils' skills effectively through requiring them to explain their working-out methods. There is insufficient development of pupils' ability to do mental calculations quickly and use various mental strategies. Teachers in Key Stage 1 use resources well but overall basic equipment is under-utilised to support pupils' learning at Key Stage 2. Teachers make insufficient use of ICT to support pupils' learning. There is also some time slippage, where the planned lesson overruns into the following day, and over-lengthy lesson introductions repeat work many pupils have mastered.
112. The National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact on pupils' progress and attainment. The school follows the recommended curriculum and the recommended teaching techniques are implemented particularly effectively at Key Stage 1. However, not all teachers at Key Stage 2 manage the timing of the three-part lesson structure well. Frequently introductions are over-long and this curtails the time available for the important lesson summary. During the main part of the lesson, some teachers tend to support pupils individually, providing more superficial teaching than if they worked in a focused manner with a group. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress overall, although at times more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. At Key Stage 2 classes are divided into ability groups across two year groups. While sound in principle, these arrangements are not wholly effective because teachers do not always provide sufficiently for the different levels of attainment within each teaching group, particularly those pupils capable of achieving higher standards. At the start of the key stage, more able pupils repeat work they covered in Key Stage 1 and expectations for the most able at the end of the key stage are not sufficiently challenging.
113. There is a need to improve monitoring and assessment arrangements in mathematics. At present the co-ordinator does not have a sufficiently good overview of standards or teaching across the school. The information gathered through analysis of assessment is not sufficiently used to affect specific changes in practice. Annual targets are set for all pupils and are evaluated. However, teachers do not break these down into their constituent parts, to provide pupils with individual learning targets which could be used to push up standards by providing a focus for teaching and learning. The summative assessment and recording system is to be updated. Although not consistently used there are sufficient resources, apart from digital clocks, for teaching the curriculum. The 'tables clubs' are effective and pupils are proud to see their names displayed.

SCIENCE

114. Standards of attainment are improving though they are still below expected levels by the end of both key stages.
115. Results in the national tests for eleven year olds for 2000 were below the national average. When compared with the results achieved by schools with pupils with similar backgrounds, they were average. The proportion of pupils achieving level 4 was well below the national average and the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level was below average. The 2000 results mask the considerable improvement made by the

school in raising standards in science from the very low base achieved over the previous four years. For example, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 4 has increased from less than half to more than three quarters of the year group. This year, the evidence from the inspection of pupils' work shows a similar picture to that of the 2000 tests at Key Stage 2. Boys do better in tests than girls.

116. Teacher assessments of pupils' performance at the age of seven in 2000 show that pupils achieved very low results compared with the national average, although those gaining at the higher level achieved better, but were still below the national average. This was a particularly weak cohort and there is good evidence that teachers' assessments this year are likely to be much higher than last year's assessments. Inspection evidence shows pupils at Key Stage 1 are currently achieving standards close to national expectations in their classwork.
117. The improvements in the results are due to the very thorough analysis of previous test results and identification of areas of weakness to set targets for improvement. The curriculum has been revised and teaching of science strengthened. The development of pupils' skills in scientific investigation shows a marked improvement since the last inspection. However, at the upper end of Key Stage 2 there are gaps to be made up in the knowledge pupils have previously acquired, and at both key stages there is unsatisfactory attention given to providing work which helps the more able pupils achieve at a higher level.
118. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have conducted experiments and made scientific observations which they record in drawings, charts and captions. They come to simple conclusions, such as when experimenting with different tastes – "I like the taste of lemons best". They know how to use a magnifying glass to make careful observations of seeds. They examine them and begin to sort by colour, shape and pattern. In one lesson they search for seeds on plants, although many pupils are unable to make the connection between the flower and the seed. They plant sunflower seeds and know that plants need water, light and the sun to grow. They understand very well the life cycle of the butterfly, as they have been observing the changes to their caterpillars which are now forming chrysalises. They have made a diary of the changes, which show they have observed well and understand what is happening. They know what is needed to keep them healthy, and what constitutes a healthy meal. They have experimented with magnets, and predicted how many paperclips the magnet will hold. They know that the sun will cast different length shadows at different times of the day, because they have observed and recorded this. They understand what is a fair test.
119. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are confident to undertake a wide range of experiments. They record these carefully and methodically, using diagrams to illustrate their work. They make predictions and draw conclusions from their findings. A younger pupil explores materials and concludes that, "chocolate is not good for making teapots because it will melt and all the tea will spill out". They know that a complete circuit is needed to make electrical devices work and experiment to find out whether the length of the wire changes the brightness of the bulb. They can select the equipment they need and set up the experiment without help. They help each other, for example pointing out that the experiment will not work if the bulb is not compatible with the voltage of the battery. They are aware of the properties of a variety of materials, and confidently describe the changes made by heat, evaporation and condensation. They experiment with sorting and filtering materials. Younger pupils set up an experiment to

monitor the effect of coca cola on eggshells and record the unpleasant results, which they can relate to the effect it will have on their teeth. Pupils are careful to use key scientific vocabulary when recording their experiments, and work is correctly set out, and includes the use of graphs to predict trends. However, throughout the key stage, there is unsatisfactory evidence of the use of ICT for the production and analysis of data.

120. The overall quality of teaching is mainly good on the evidence of the work seen in an examination of the pupils' written work. In the lessons seen, teaching was never less than satisfactory, with half the teaching seen being good or better. This is an improvement over the standard of teaching seen in the previous inspection. There are good improvements in the teaching of scientific enquiry. Throughout the school, lessons are well planned with teachers making particularly good use of practical activities. Teachers are also careful to use and model the correct scientific terminology. The scheme of work provides satisfactory guidance, and where lessons are good, teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge.
121. In the good lessons, teachers are enthusiastic and enthuse and motivate their students. They use questioning well to set the context of the lesson, to stimulate pupils and activate their knowledge of the subject. Pupils respond well in lessons and show independence and work well in groups to organise themselves. They work well with other pupils in carrying out activities, are very aware of safety procedures and produce their work neatly and carefully. The pace is good and timed targets help ensure pupils remain on task and complete their work. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. One very good feature in Year 1 is the way the teacher summarises what has been learnt at the end of the pupils' work. Teachers are encouraged to teach key vocabulary within a context which is understandable to pupils and can be related to their experience, and there is good evidence of this in pupils' past work, such as looking at forces through studying the moving parts of a bicycle.
122. At Key Stage 1 there is a careful build up of knowledge and skills. Learning opportunities are good, and teachers encourage children to carefully record what they have found out. Lesson objectives are made clear, and pupils are given good opportunities for experimenting. The curriculum is planned on a two-year cycle, so that pupils in the mixed-year groups do not repeat work. At Key Stage 2, pupils in Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6 are divided into sets based on ability. At the lower end of Key Stage 2 there is an over-dependence on using worksheets with pupils in the lower ability set. Pupils throughout the key stage are mainly challenged to think about what they are doing and encouraged to work independently and construct their own experiments. However, teachers do not sufficiently enable pupils of higher ability to extend their knowledge.
123. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and guidance to colleagues. The efforts he has taken to identify the ways in which standards can be improved are having success. There is a new scheme of work based on national guidance and the policy has been revised to take account of this and the new Curriculum 2000. He has been given some time to monitor the pupils' work and teaching. There is evidence that targets that have been identified have been well communicated to teachers, as the results can be seen in pupils' work. However, there remain some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. There have been good initiatives to raise standards, such as the after-school science club for Year 6 pupils, which has involved parents so that they can continue to support their children at home. Individual assessment is in place, based on pupils attaining the learning objectives of each lesson, and how well they have understood the scientific knowledge and skills that form each block of work. Resources are satisfactory to meet the needs of the new scheme of work. The school

courtyard garden is used well to support experiments with plants and living things, to discover what factors are essential to healthy plant growth. There is a satisfactory programme of visits and visitors to support the subject: pupils have visited the local planetarium, and a local college for work on materials, and there is a planned visit for a science theatre group in Dudley.

ART AND DESIGN

124. The standards of work achieved by pupils aged seven and eleven are above those expected for their ages. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, when the standards achieved by eleven year olds were as expected for their age.
125. Pupils in Key Stage 1 work in a wide range of media. Pupils in Year 2 have produced paper sculptures and also masks of a high quality in clay. They have worked well to join together paper and fabric to make a design. They have made models from junk materials to represent creatures and plants at Fens Pool. They have worked in Batik to produce beach scenes which show a good sense of design. Pupils in Year 1 have made effective prints using leaves. They have also worked with tie-dye and collage and produced good designs for butterflies using pipe cleaners and wire, which they are making into a sculpture for their garden. They have used the work of Lowry and Constable to produce paintings of town and country, in the process developing their understanding of geography. In all of these activities they show a good sense of shape, pattern and colour, which is promoted by good teaching, well supported by the expertise of a classroom assistant.
126. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to work in a wide range of media. Pupils in Year 6 produce good observational drawings of plants. They have created flowers in textiles and tie-dye work of a high quality. They have designed a new stamp for the millennium. Their sketchbooks show work on colour in the style of Henri Matisse. They are also aware of other artists, such as Van Gogh and Turner. They have executed striking tree scenes, using drawn thread on hessian, and produced very good, atmospheric 'mood' paintings using watercolours, based on photographs. In an observed lesson, pupils were designing and beginning to make a textile which would tell part of the story of their own version of 'The Good Samaritan'. Having chosen their design, they were making templates and beginning to cut the material they needed. The range and quality of their work is above that expected for eleven year olds, building upon the good work lower in the school.
127. Teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers, well led by the subject co-ordinator, have a good understanding of the subject. Both they and classroom assistants support pupils well with their tasks. In a lesson observed in Year 1, where the class were making their wind sculptures of butterflies, each stage was explained carefully by the teacher, working closely with the classroom assistant to make sure that all pupils knew what to do before they were allowed to proceed. As a result pupils had a good understanding of the process. Because of the success they achieve, pupils have very positive attitudes, which promote good learning. Younger pupils take a pride in their work and are keen to display it. Older pupils work well in groups and individually, and are fully involved in the task they are doing.
128. Teachers make good links with other curriculum areas, using art to develop pupils' understanding of science, when they use leaves and other natural materials, or of history by designing and making reliefs of Romans and Celts in battle, or a cardboard mosaic in Roman style. The influence of non-western cultures has not been as

evident, but the school is introducing pupils to a range of art, including that from other cultures, through the art gallery which it is setting up in a corridor of the school. Pupils' work is also celebrated, in classroom displays and around the school, including a framed 'Picture of the Month', at the time of the inspection a collage of 'Pansies'. The co-ordinator has ensured that the subject has a high profile by promoting good displays in the school and involving the school in a number of exhibitions in the community, such as one at the Merryhill Centre. She supports other teachers in their planning, but the school has yet to develop a system to check on the progress pupils are making as they move through the school, which would help teachers in planning the next stage of work and give pupils the opportunity to achieve even higher standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

129. Standards of attainment are broadly in line with those typically found nationally by the end of both key stages. This represents an improvement at Key Stage 2 since the previous inspection, although the uneven progress identified previously is still an unsatisfactory feature of the provision.
130. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the complete design process in the context of salads and healthy eating. In each year group the teaching develops pupils' understanding of healthy foods and the needs of the consumer. Pupils' critical skills, using their senses of sight and taste, are developed so that by Year 2 pupils consider the visual effect of their products. All pupils have achieved a good knowledge of how to use a range of culinary tools safely and teachers emphasise appropriate vocabulary so that Year 2 pupils identify chopping, slicing, shredding and peeling as a range of uses for a knife. From Year 1 pupils develop a good knowledge of hygiene and safety, and this is emphasised consistently throughout the key stage by teachers and support staff. Pupils record their work in Year 2 but there is insufficient emphasis on writing recipes or evaluations.
131. Standards at Key Stage 2 have improved and the issues raised in the previous inspection in relation to the designing element have been satisfactorily addressed. In contrast, pupils' evaluations, an essential element in the design process, and in moving their learning forward, remain unrecorded and under-emphasised. By the end of the key stage, pupils reach a satisfactory standard when making a moving toy and a good standard as they construct slippers.

These pupils work from a pattern, using measurements and use sewing as a joining technique. Pupils evaluate commercial products, identifying the needs of the consumer, the properties of materials and how these can be used to best effect in the final product. Pupils in Year 5 follow the same planned activity as in Year 6 and they can generate a design successfully. In Years 3 and 4 some pupils record their designs and made a range of objects such as torches, photograph frames and burglar alarms. Most pupils have made a moving toy using hydraulic mechanisms. Pupils experience a range of materials throughout the key stage and several mechanisms for movement but they have little experience of control systems.

132. Teaching and learning are good at Key Stage 1. Lessons are purposeful and well organised. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall but is very varied, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. The quality of learning and how well pupils achieve are very much dependent on the individual skills of the teacher. In a very good lesson, effective planning with precise learning objectives enabled the teacher to set out clearly for pupils what he expected everyone to achieve. So, pupils were very focused

on their task of making their moccasins. Through skilful questioning he promoted good discussions and stimulated pupils to think through the problems in translating designs on paper to cutting material. In a lesson where pupils were evaluating types of bread prior to making a sandwich, the teaching and learning were unsatisfactory and pupils made little progress because they were not given enough to do as they waited for their turn to taste the bread. The co-ordinator sets a good example in teaching practical skills and pupils in his lessons achieve well, while pupils in other classes at Key Stage 2 have less experience of practical work.

133. Pupils' attitudes are good. They respond well to the tasks and work responsibly together at practical activities. They treat tools with respect and are conscious of the needs of others. When teaching is good they co-operate well and work at a good pace, striving to produce good work. Where teaching is unsatisfactory pupils respond with superficial work and little involvement with their task. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is a second language achieve satisfactorily. Particularly good links are made with science, but insufficient use is made of pupils' data-handling skills and literacy skills, particularly to record evaluations.
134. The design and technology curriculum has been re-planned since the previous inspection but still has shortcomings. Clear learning objectives, skills and range of materials appropriate to each year group have yet to be defined. The impact on food technology following the loss of the school's oven has not been taken into account in the Key Stage 2 planning. Visits to the local technical college support learning well. An assessment and recording system is to be introduced and this should strengthen the co-ordinator's ability to monitor progress and standards.

GEOGRAPHY

135. Standards are broadly in line with expected levels at Key Stage 1 but are below expectations at Key Stage 2. Judgements are similar to those made at the last inspection. Very few pupils achieve above expected levels. The range and quality of pupils' written work are unsatisfactory.
136. At Key Stage 1 pupils show appropriate awareness of different places and their knowledge of places and location is satisfactory. They can identify key features of their local area. For example, following a walk around the locality they recognise photographs of these features, remember where they are located and can place them on a large-scale map of Pensnett. They recognise some map symbols, for example, the church and hospital. They have a sound knowledge of the world around them. They know the countries of the United Kingdom and can show their relative positions on a map and they follow the travels of Barnaby Bear on his travels around the world. Their verbal responses to teachers' questions are sound but there is insufficient written recording of work and drawing and using maps. For example, Year 1 pupils can trace their routes to school on a large-scale map but Year 2 pupils do not make their own individual route maps.
137. The study of rivers is a major focus throughout Key Stage 2. Year 6 pupils have a sound understanding of how rivers shape the landscape through erosion and the transportation and deposition of material. They have a sound knowledge of the features of rivers at different stages and use the correct vocabulary appropriately. They can identify these features on photographs and on CD-ROMs and they have an awareness of the effects of flooding on the lives of people. Pupils have a sound

knowledge of places in the UK and gain basic knowledge of the physical and human features of underdeveloped countries, for example, Mali and Burkina Faso, but have limited knowledge of other significant places and environments in the world. Pupils do not have sufficient knowledge of different places, lack understanding of geographical and environmental issues and do not make satisfactory progress in the development of skills and understanding of contrasting environments. They have limited understanding of how physical factors affect human activity, for example in the location of settlements. Analysis of pupils' work shows that pupils do not cover geographical topics in sufficient depth, the range of work undertaken is limited and there is a lack of systematic development of map skills. Pupils can locate places in atlases but they are not familiar with the use of grid references to locate features on maps or use map keys and symbols appropriately.

138. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. Teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge and good questioning techniques. They promote pupils' speaking and listening skills effectively. In one effective lesson in Year 1, the teacher used a range of methods, including skilful questioning, use of photographs and collating contributions of the whole class, to keep pupils fully engaged throughout the lesson. Lesson planning is satisfactory but does not always take sufficient account of pupils' different learning needs. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 follow the same topics and teachers share the same planning. However, activities are insufficiently developed to ensure that older pupils undertake harder work. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress but higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged.
139. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning are unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. Similar weaknesses in planning to those at Key Stage 1 occur at Key Stage 2. In addition, there is more inconsistency in the quality of teaching. Some teachers' expectations of their pupils are not high enough. Lessons proceed at a slow pace with limited use of resources to support pupils' learning. Not all teachers use an appropriate range of teaching methods to explain geographical ideas, relying too much on verbal explanations rather than using visual resources. In one lesson, pupils were expected to interpret photographs but there were not enough sets available. In another lesson, the teacher provided newspaper cuttings on floods but gave insufficient guidance on how to analyse the information, so that pupils were reading without clear purpose. In contrast, where learning is more effective, teachers plan practical activities to help pupils' understanding. For example, Year 6 pupils' understanding was helped by an activity in the playground in which they 'modelled' the work of a meandering river, transporting and depositing material. Pupils have some opportunities to research information on topics using CD-ROMs and the Internet, but in general the use of ICT to support pupils' learning is underdeveloped. The amount of recorded work produced by pupils is less than that typically found and indicates that teachers do not take appropriate opportunities to develop pupils' writing or numeracy skills.
140. There have been insufficient improvements since the last inspection. Curriculum planning is not fully effective. The curriculum is based on a two-year cycle so pupils in different years do similar work, with little planning to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities or ages. In consequence, there is too much repetition of work. There is now a scheme of work based on national guidance but it needs to be further modified to provide sufficient support for teachers in planning work. Assessment procedures have yet to be introduced. The co-ordinator has recently taken responsibility for this subject. He has a sound understanding of the areas for development. However, although appropriate priorities have been clearly identified, an action plan to address these has yet to be put in place. The school makes sound use of the local area and trips further afield to support pupil's learning. Resources are

generally adequate but there are limited displays of pupils' geographical work, particularly at Key Stage 2.

HISTORY

141. Standards are broadly in line with expected levels at Key Stage 2, though very few pupils achieve high standards. Standards are similar to those identified at the time of the previous inspection. Standards are below those typically found at Key Stage 1.
142. At Key Stage 1, pupils are underachieving and there has been a fall in standards since the previous inspection brought about through insufficient work being covered at an appropriate depth. By the end of the key stage most pupils in Year 2 have studied two historical personalities and considered some of their contributions to society. They have recorded work on changes over time, sequencing fashion changes in bathing outfits. Little other work is recorded to help pupils reflect upon or recall their learning. Insufficient emphasis is placed upon the development of their enquiry skills, chronology and comparing the past to the present.
143. These skills are securely established by the end of Key Stage 2. At the start of the key stage pupils construct time lines and record explanations for conventions such as A.D. and B.C. By the age of eleven pupils know some of the basic characteristics of each of the periods they have studied and some of their lasting influences on life today. This understanding is developed consistently as pupils successfully identify and record ideas, beliefs and social structures of the periods they study. By the age of eleven pupils make comparisons between Britain since the 1930s and life today. In this context teachers develop appropriate objective analytical skills in pupils, but, in contrast, do not place sufficient emphasis on technological changes. Previously pupils in Years 6 and 5, in their study of Victorians, recorded conditions in factories, child labour and some Victorian reformers but teachers under-utilised the rich resource of local industry as a source to support this learning. Pupils, particularly those in Year 5, can confidently identify a broad range of historical sources.
144. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 2. No teaching was observed Key Stage 1, as history was not timetabled during the period of the inspection. Effective introductions and teachers' good questioning skills are the strengths in good lessons. Good teaching at the end of the key stage holds pupils' interest through explanations, examples and the use of pupils' own experiences. Pupils respond with interest and attend well, volunteering information and answering questions. In contrast, when the pace of the lesson is slow and there is an over-reliance on worksheets, pupils exhibit a lack of enthusiasm, particularly when recording their work. On one occasion a teacher provided books and illustrations and encouraged research and then pupils were more animated and responded well to the challenge.
145. Marking is generally positive and teachers' ongoing comments assess and support pupils' immediate learning needs. In both key stages teachers do not give sufficient opportunities for pupils to use their writing and presentation skills nor do they use make effective use of ICT to support pupils' learning. All pupils are included in lessons but there is a lack of specific planning for the needs of those pupils with special educational needs and for the needs of higher achievers, and this restricts the attainment of these groups of pupils. There is now an emphasis on teaching cause and effect, an issue identified in the previous report, but planned opportunities for personal study, in order to extend older pupils and the higher achievers, have not been implemented.

146. Some effective decisions have been made for the development of history. There is a new planning structure and repetition of topics has been removed. However, this planning is not yet sufficiently developed in order to achieve steady progression in the acquisition of skills. Planning lacks clearly identified learning objectives for the two year groups within each teaching phase. Monitoring of the subject has not yet ensured that all pupils in the same year group receive similar experiences and that work is always at an appropriate depth. Assessment and recording procedures are developed but are not yet in use. Resources are insufficient, particularly for supporting the new elements in the curriculum. Visits and visitors effectively enrich the curriculum.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

147. Standards of attainment have improved since the last inspection and are broadly in line with those typically found by the end of both key stages.
148. At the time of the last inspection, pupils made unsatisfactory progress across the school and standards were below national expectations in both key stages. Now, with improved provision for ICT, pupils make satisfactory progress in specific ICT lessons and generally achieve sound standards. However, during the inspection, there were few occasions when pupils were observed using computers in lessons in other subjects to support their learning.
149. At Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress and by the age of seven, pupils' knowledge and understanding of ICT are broadly in line with expected standards. They know that they can get information from a variety of technological sources. Year 2 pupils can log on and off the computer using their own codes, use the mouse and keyboard functions competently and show sound familiarity with the icons and tool bars on the screen.

They can open specific files and save and retrieve their work. They have acquired simple word-processing skills, varying the size of the text and combining text with clipart pictures. Pupils have successfully used a graphics package to create their own patterns and pictures, selecting, transforming shapes and experimenting with various combinations. They show appropriate skills, and results are of a satisfactory standard. Year 1 pupils have a sound knowledge of how to control the movement of objects by giving signals or commands. However, Year 2 pupils do not learn how to plan and record sequences of instructions to control the movement of devices on computer screen or floor. Year 2 pupils appreciate the need to organise data and are beginning to use ICT to represent information graphically. They have collected data and created manually a pictogram on 'paper', with a view to comparing this process with using a data program. They can take pictures with a digital camera.

150. At Key Stage 2, pupils' overall attainment is in line with expected levels for their ages. Pupils use the computers with confidence and some have well-developed skills. There is sound development of word-processing skills and pupils reach appropriate standards. Pupils are aware of what they can do with the appearance of text. They change the font, size and colour to enhance their work. They can insert a text box into a word document, merging text and graphics effectively, and show appropriate word keyboard skills when entering text. Pupils understand the difference between accessing information from a hard disk, CD-ROMs and the Internet. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 show sound awareness of the differences between a CD-ROM and the Internet as sources of information and they have confidence in searching

through both for information. Pupils in one Years 5/6 class achieved good standards in developing a multimedia presentation. Most pupils can use the multimedia program to organise and present a set of linked pages that incorporate pictures images, sound and text. The lower attaining pupils can assemble these features to create a multimedia page. Pupils' presentations show good imagination, awareness of different audiences and application of skills. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a sound understanding of databases. They can complete fields and records to construct simple databases and use them to carry out simple searches. Opportunities for older pupils to have experience in control and monitoring events are planned for later in the term.

151. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. Then there was little direct teaching of skills, planning was insufficiently detailed and there were variations in teacher competence. Teaching is now satisfactory overall, and all classes have regular focused teaching in the computer suite. Teachers are well prepared and lessons are well organised. Most teachers have at least a sound knowledge. However, the quality of pupils' learning, the progress they make and the standards they achieve are still very much dependent upon the expertise of individual teachers. For example, in one lesson, pupils achieved good standards because the teacher could explain clearly to pupils the advanced features of the program and help them refine their multimedia pages. He also made good use of the expertise of other pupils to demonstrate to the rest of the class what could be achieved. In contrast, in another lesson, pupils failed to make satisfactory progress due to the lack of teacher's subject knowledge and her inadequate organisation. The teacher did not give pupils a clear sense of the purpose of the lesson so pupils rushed through their task and could not retrieve steps taken when they went wrong. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching and learning in the computer suite is satisfactory overall, with some good lessons observed. In general, teachers' explanations and demonstrations are clear and well paced. They give precise instructions and introduce correct vocabulary and file management techniques systematically.
- So pupils are clear on what is expected, settle quickly to their tasks and make satisfactory progress in developing techniques and skills. Teachers monitor the progress of pupils effectively during lessons using questions to reinforce and assess pupils' learning and providing additional help where necessary. Pupils who struggle with tasks are well supported, so those with special educational needs make appropriate gains during lessons, and those with English as an additional language cope well. Pupils clearly enjoy ICT, are well motivated and have good attitudes towards learning. When working in pairs, pupils learn to share ideas and help each other. This contributes well to their learning. They confidently ask questions of their teachers, understand about taking care of equipment and do so responsibly.
152. Teaching and learning in classrooms are not as effective because teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support learning in other subjects. For example, pupils have few opportunities to develop their word-processing skills across the curriculum. Pupils do not sufficiently develop skills in amending and redrafting work. The school makes only limited use of information handling software in the support of mathematics and science. In history and geography there is limited evidence of the use of ICT to develop research skills. Teachers provide few links with art and music. Examples of pupils' work are sparse. There are some isolated examples on display but pupils and teachers do not maintain portfolios of work. Pupils can save work in individual folders on computers. This is a useful development but does not help pupils learn the skills of communicating and presenting information in a variety of ways.

153. The management of the subject is good. There have been good improvements in ICT since the last inspection. The subject co-ordinator is very knowledgeable, manages the subject with enthusiasm and provides good advice and support to colleagues in planning. Policy guidelines are satisfactory and curriculum planning has improved, ensuring a broad curriculum and satisfactory progression in the development of skills. Planned professional development is in hand for all teaching staff in order to develop their expertise and increase confidence in teaching the subject. The co-ordinator has undertaken some monitoring of teaching and learning. He has identified appropriate priorities for future development and a fully developed strategic plan for the future is in place. However, he does not have sufficient overview of standards in the school because assessment procedures are inadequate and do not provide the information on standards pupils achieve. Although informal assessments provide teachers with a sound understanding of what pupils understand and can do, overall procedures are unsatisfactory because there are no whole-school systems to monitor pupils' progress over time. The co-ordinator has developed appropriate recording procedures for implementation next term. The co-ordinator has played a significant role in developing the computer suite. This valuable resource is having a positive impact on progress, as it enables whole-class teaching and provides all pupils with regular access to programs and equipment. There are good quality computer systems in classrooms, though these are underused.

MUSIC

154. The standards achieved by pupils aged seven and eleven are typical for their ages. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when the standards achieved by pupils at Key Stage 2 were below national expectations.
155. Year 2 pupils listen to and experiment with a range of percussion instruments to find out what kind of noise they produce. As a result they can identify different instruments and the sound they produce. For example, the teacher consolidated learning by means of a card game in which pupils had to identify the instrument or the noise it produced as they passed a pot around the class, singing in tune as they did so. Most pupils could successfully identify 'drum' and 'cymbal', but not all pupils could remember the names of instruments such as 'triangle' or 'tom tom'. In a similar lesson, Year 1 pupils identified a narrower range of instruments.
156. In Year 6, pupils sing, mostly in tune, to taped music of, for example, songs by the Beatles. They can reproduce the beat of the music with their hands and feet. Some pupils play the music for the song on brass instruments, recorder and keyboard. The quality of pupils' singing is sound and, combined with instrumental accompaniment, effectively contributes to a performance involving all pupils in the class. Pupils in Year 4 explore rhythmic patterns by clapping with their hands. They then create their own patterns and perform them to a satisfactory standard.
157. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. Teachers have a sound understanding of the subject and use musical vocabulary well. They also use resources, particularly the range of instruments, well to develop pupils' understanding of music. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher created a good atmosphere by playing taped music as the pupils came into the classroom after playtime. Her good subject knowledge and use of appropriate musical vocabulary, such as tempo and rhythm, helped pupils to learn well. In a Year 6 lesson, the quality of learning was good due to the teacher's good knowledge of the subject. This enabled him to provide effective evaluation which led to an improvement in the pupils' performance. Pupils are attentive and listen well to each other performing, although opportunities for them to evaluate

their performances are limited. Occasionally teachers do not share the objective of the lesson with pupils, so that they do not fully understand why they are doing a particular task, which slows learning.

158. The school uses assemblies well to promote pupils' appreciation of music, both by listening to the work of famous composers, such as Vivaldi, or listening to pupils perform. During the inspection the school recorder group performed a range of modern songs well, having previously rehearsed them in the after-school recorder club. There are opportunities in school for pupils to learn brass instruments and keyboard. There is also a school choir, as well as opportunities for pupils to take part in school productions. The current co-ordinator, although only in a temporary post, has worked hard to sort out resources and develop guidelines for the subject. He provides good support for other teachers but has not had the opportunity to monitor standards directly. Teachers use national guidelines in their planning but have adapted them to take account of pupils' prior learning. Planning is shared by teachers working in their phase teams spanning two year groups. The school does not yet have a system for assessing pupils' progress, which would help teachers to plan lessons more effectively.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

159. Standards in physical education are as expected nationally at the end of both key stages. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move up through the school. Standards are similar to those seen in the previous inspection, with an improvement in the standards of swimming.
160. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils move confidently around the hall, showing a clear awareness of space and other pupils. They move creatively, moving in twisted and curling ways. They show a good understanding of how it would feel to push your way out of a contained space, such as a balloon, or chrysalis. They try hard and work imaginatively. In another lesson, pupils moved as if they were butterflies. They moved and paused and changed their movements effectively. They demonstrated good control and put together a satisfactory sequence of movements. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have satisfactorily developed their skills. They move confidently over apparatus, showing good skills and control. Older pupils have the opportunity to learn country dancing, and obey commands well and move well in time to the music. In games lessons, pupils were seen improving their skills in catching and fielding at rounders. They can analyse their performance and know how to improve their skills. They have a good understanding of the rules of the game and play with enthusiasm. Pupils in Key Stage 2 attend swimming lessons. By the time they are eleven, the majority can swim 25 yards unaided.
161. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but not as good as seen in the previous inspection. Teachers are effective in ensuring that all the elements of the lesson are in place, so that pupils are given time to warm up and cool down. But, because of time restrictions, these are short elements to the lessons and there is insufficient time for pupils to practise and develop their skills. The use of pupils to demonstrate skills and to encourage pupils to reflect on their performance so as to improve is not given satisfactory attention. In most lessons, pupils respond to the teaching by making good physical and creative efforts and take pride and pleasure in the quality of their performance. Usually, lessons are conducted at a brisk pace, with teachers showing good control and management skills. In turn, pupils show good attitudes, behave well and work well.

162. The new co-ordinator is enthusiastic and keen to develop the subject. A new policy has been revised to take account of Curriculum 2000, but there has not yet been time to introduce this to staff. There are no formal assessment procedures, although teachers monitor pupils' performance during lessons. There are good opportunities for pupils to participate in out of school clubs and activities. The school receives support from the 'Sportslink' initiative to provide equipment and coaching, and additional coaching is provided, for example, in tennis, cricket, and football. The school competes in competitive sports such as five-a-side football, cross-country running, athletics and Kwik cricket and the swimming gala. There is an annual sports day. Pupils are enthusiastic about physical education, and in discussion expressed the desire for more lessons in which they can play competitive games, such as football and rounders.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

163. The standard of pupils' work in religious education by the end of Key Stage 2 is below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and below the standards found in the previous inspection. At Key Stage 1 it meets the expectations of the syllabus and is similar to that found in the previous inspection.
164. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of Christian stories and the meaning behind important celebrations, such as Christmas and Easter. They can re-tell stories of that they have heard, such as the story of Zacchaeus and the flight from Egypt. They record their favourite part of the story of David and Goliath: "when God tells David to kill Goliath". They show a good understanding of the significance of Remembrance Day and record their visit to the local War Memorial and have some understanding of why there are poppies: "because the ones who died won't see poppies any more". They understand the story of the Prodigal Son and can relate the events well to their own experiences. In this they show a good understanding of the spiritual dimensions of the story as well as being able to respond to the consequences. For example, one pupil says that the father felt sad when his son left, because "he has a son who he's always loved and now he's going away". This provokes one pupil to say that "Dads don't care when you grow up", to which another replies, "Yes they do, they always love you". They know that the father will be "over the world – over the moon" when his son returns.
165. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils apply their moral and spiritual understanding to wider issues, such as how the story of the Prodigal Son is a story of forgiveness. The pupils can relate this to their own experiences of falling out with friends and how they mend their relationships. They understand the moral of the story and demonstrate this well when they begin to produce their own short plays based on wrongs committed and how they are forgiven. Younger pupils work together to examine stories about the life of Jesus and identify what this tells them about Jesus' character. They begin to create a list; that Jesus was gentle and kind. Older pupils reflect on the idea of "whatever you do for one of the least of these, you do for me". The story illustrates the idea well, and the pupils know that "he does this for Jesus, because Jesus is in all of us". They understand the idea that everyone is your neighbour and can identify the ways in which they, as school pupils, have helped their neighbours, for example, by participating in Red Nose Day, collecting for Christian Aid, the Child of Achievement Award, and giving clothes to the Salvation Army.
166. The teaching seen in lessons is mainly satisfactory. However, overall, teaching is unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2 because the amount of work produced is not covering the curriculum of the locally agreed syllabus in sufficient depth. Where it is good, the

teacher allows time for good discussion, and encourages all pupils to express their opinions. Teachers at Key Stage 1 provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to record their versions of the stories. Pupils listen well and good questioning helps pupils develop their understanding and relate what they learn to their personal lives. At Key Stage 2 teachers provide sufficient time in lessons for pupils to discuss and reflect on the moral and spiritual ideas raised by the stories, but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to record. There is limited evidence in the work scrutiny of pupils being given time to develop their ideas or to show how what they have learned impacts on their thinking. The work in pupils' books shows that there is an uneven balance between the teaching of Christian ideas and stories and those of other major religions. Across the key stages, there is insufficient attention given to developing the pupils' understanding of other religions as outlined in the agreed syllabus.

167. The newly appointed co-ordinator has plans for the development of the subject and has introduced national guidance for the subject. However, it is not clear how well teachers are following the new curriculum. The locally agreed syllabus is being revised and will fit with the national guidance. Resources are satisfactory, but need updating to meet the requirements of the new syllabus. There are good links with the local church, and pupils in Key Stage 1 have visited a Hindu temple.