

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JAMES CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Handsworth, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103401

Headteacher: Mark Lanyon

Reporting inspector: Ian Nelson
2220

Dates of inspection: June 10th to 13th 2002

Inspection number: 196197

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: | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Sandwell Road Handsworth Birmingham West Midlands |
| Postcode: | B21 8NH |
| Telephone number: | 0121 523 5861 |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Fr Peter Hibbert |
| Date of previous inspection: | July 1997 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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|--------------|------------------|----------------------|---|--|
| 2220 | Ian Nelson | Registered inspector | Information and communication technology (ICT) | What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management |
| 19697 | Janice Moorhouse | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? Partnership with parents. |
| 17263 | Andy Bond | Team inspector | Mathematics Physical education (PE) | How good are curricular and other opportunities? |
| 26405 | Carole Bond | Team inspector | The Foundation Stage Equality of opportunity English as an additional language Art and design Music | |
| 25384 | Rob Bonner | Team inspector | Science Design and technology (DT) | |
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|---|---|
| Number on roll | 410 (Bigger than other primary schools) |
| Pupils entitled to free school meals | 34% (Above average) |
| Pupils with English as an additional language | 66% (Very high) |
| Pupils on the register of special educational needs | 20% (Broadly average) |

St James is a large Church of England controlled primary school for pupils aged four to eleven. It serves an area of Birmingham with people from a rich variety of cultural backgrounds. The area includes busy commercial centres as well as some social and economic deprivation. A high proportion of the pupils speak English as an additional language. Only a few pupils leave or join the school part way through the school year. Attainment on entry to the school is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a sound education for its pupils. The head and governors provide good leadership and management of the school though not all subject coordinators are effective. Teaching overall is satisfactory, though it ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Standards are rising but are not yet high enough. However, because attainment is below average teaching needs to be more consistently good to ensure that standards rise fast enough to match standards nationally. Overall the school is improving and now provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher and governors provide good leadership and management.
- The strong emphasis on being part of a caring and sharing community, where everyone is valued, has led to very good relationships and positive attitudes throughout the school.
- Provision for pupils with special learning or behaviour needs is good.
- Pupils behave well because the quality of provision for moral development is good and teachers manage them well in lessons and around the school.
- The school makes good use of community links to enrich pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Provision for children in the reception classes (Foundation Stage).
- Attendance and punctuality.

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 July 1997. Since then improvement has been just satisfactory. Although standards in English, mathematics and science are rising, they are not rising fast enough to match the national average yet. Standards in ICT, geography and music have not improved. The quality of teaching has improved, with less being unsatisfactory than at the time of the last inspection but there is only a marginal increase in the amount of very good and excellent teaching. Although the school has greatly improved the resources for ICT it has not done enough to improve the teaching of this subject. The role of the governors has been strengthened. Pupils' behaviour is better than when the school was last inspected.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 |
| English | E | D | D | B |
| Mathematics | D | E | E | E |
| Science | E | E | E | D |

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

The table shows that standards in last year's national tests for eleven-year-olds were below the national average in English and well below in mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, the results were above average in English, below in science and well below in mathematics. Although test results in both English and science are rising, overall results have not kept pace with most other schools. Results in mathematics tests have fallen significantly in recent years, but teachers' assessments of the current Year 6 pupils indicate that this decline has now been halted. The school exceeded its target for English and met that for mathematics in last year's tests. It has set itself rigorous targets for 2002 in mathematics, but the English target is lower than last year's.

Results in the national tests for seven-year-olds last year were below average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. Compared with similar schools, standards were average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. The seven-year-olds' test results have been rising slightly faster than standards nationally in recent years.

The findings of the inspection are that standards in English are now average at the end of Year 2 but below average by Year 6. Standards in mathematics and science are below average at both Year 2 and Year 6. Standards in ICT, geography and music are also below average at seven and eleven. In all other subjects standards are similar to those found in other schools. Overall, standards are not yet high enough.

Standards on entry to the school are below average, but by the end of their time in reception the children are reaching the level expected for this age-group in some areas of learning. Overall most pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make steady progress through the school. Some particularly able pupils do well, but other above average pupils do not achieve as much as they might.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Good. Pupils enjoy their lessons, settle quickly to work and concentrate on the tasks they are given. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. Pupils get along very well with each other and with the adults in school. They are particularly good at showing respect for, and an understanding of, the many cultures represented in the school. |
| Attendance | Unsatisfactory. Attendance and punctuality have been problems for the school and although showing some signs of improvement a small nucleus of parents are regularly late in getting their children to school. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 6 |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Quality of teaching | Satisfactory | 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.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall throughout the school. At the time of the last inspection teaching was also judged to be satisfactory, but the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons was three times greater than during this inspection. Teaching therefore has improved overall. The strongest teaching and the best learning are in mathematics and science, particularly at Year 6. The best teaching is based upon very good planning which outlines precisely what pupils will learn. It motivates and interests pupils so that they work hard and do their best throughout the lesson. There is a clear emphasis on learning basic skills and correct vocabulary so that pupils learn the technical language to go with the subject. The weakest teaching and learning are in ICT where too many teachers lack the confidence to teach effectively. They rely too heavily on the national guidance and do not help pupils to build upon what they already know. Marking of work is inconsistent and does not always help pupils to know how to improve their work.

The teaching of English, including literacy is satisfactory overall. Teaching of mathematics, including numeracy is good. In most lessons teaching aims to help all pupils to achieve their best but in the weakest lessons some higher attaining pupils are not given hard enough work to keep them interested. Where teaching is good, as in mathematics and science, standards are beginning to rise faster than have been doing because pupils are learning at a good pace. In the weaker lessons the pace of learning is too slow and pupils do not build upon what they have learned earlier. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall and they make sound progress towards their learning targets. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good in reception and in Years 1 and 2 and they make good progress. In Years 3 to 6 it is satisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Satisfactory overall. Provision for the Foundation Stage does not meet the current guidance. The school includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and RE in its planning and makes good use of community links to enhance pupils' learning. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good. The school provides effectively for pupils with special learning or behaviour needs. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Satisfactory. The school gives sound support to pupils with English as an additional language so that they become increasingly fluent in their understanding and use of it in school. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good overall. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. The school provides good opportunities for social development and promotes moral and cultural development particularly well. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Satisfactory overall. The school is good at making pupils feel safe and comfortable and at looking after them. It is not as successful at assessing and recording their progress and using this information to plan future work, except in mathematics. |

The school has good links with parents and the parents have very positive views of the school. There are plenty of opportunities for parents to get involved in the school and their child's learning but not all take the opportunities offered to them.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Satisfactory overall. The head leads the school well and is delegating increasingly to other senior staff. However not all those with management responsibilities are as effective in their roles as they could be yet. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Good. The governors know their duties and have good systems in place to make sure that they know how well the school is doing. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Satisfactory. The school has some good systems in place for checking how well it is performing but some of these are too new to have led to improvements in standards yet. |
| The strategic use of resources | Good. The school is good at identifying opportunities to secure funding for special projects and makes effective use of the funds at its disposal. |

The school has a satisfactory number of suitably qualified teaching and support staff. Resources overall are satisfactory, but resources for reception are unsatisfactory. The school has good resources for supporting pupils with special learning needs. The head and the governors have a secure understanding of the need to challenge spending decisions, consult on them, seek competitive prices and compare the school's performance against others. The accommodation is very cramped and includes a number of temporary classrooms in the playground. There is no space in the main building to house a library. The reception class outdoor play area is inadequate.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. • Children like the school. • Good teaching means they are making good progress. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework is not given consistently. • The school does not provide enough after-school clubs and activities. |

The inspection team agrees with the parents that the school helps children to grow in maturity, to work hard and that they like school. They also agree that homework should be improved and given out more consistently. They think that the teaching and progress children make is satisfactory rather than good. The inspectors think that the school provides a satisfactory range of after-school clubs and activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Children enter the school with standards that are below average for their age, particularly in language and communication. Around half of them have English as an additional language. Throughout the Foundation Stage most make satisfactory progress overall and reach the expected standards in several aspects of their work. However few reach the expected standards in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language receive adequate support and make satisfactory progress overall.

2 In the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds standards in reading and mathematics were below average when compared to all schools. Standards in writing were average. When compared with similar schools, standards were average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. Standards are rising slightly faster than standards nationally. In science, the assessments by the teachers in 2001 showed pupils to be well below average compared with all schools and below average in comparison with similar schools. Although standards are rising, the proportion of seven-year-olds gaining the higher than expected level 3 in the tests is below average. Analysis of the information on standards shows that girls from Pakistani families under-achieve at Year 2.

3 In the 2001 national tests for eleven-year-olds standards were below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science when compared with all schools. When compared with similar schools standards were above average in English, below average in science and well below average in mathematics. Although standards in English and science have been rising, test results in English have not been rising as fast as standards nationally. Standards in mathematics have been falling quite markedly recently. Although the school is getting an increasing number of pupils to the expected level 4 in the tests, the proportion reaching the higher than expected level 5 is well below average, despite two pupils gaining GCSE mathematics last year. The school achieved its targets for pupils gaining at least the expected level 4 in mathematics and exceeded its target in English. Analysis of the information on standards shows that girls from Indian families under-achieve at Year 6.

4 The inspection findings confirm that attainment in English is below average at eleven although it is average for the seven-year-olds. This means that standards at seven have been maintained since the previous inspection but at eleven they show a decline when compared with standards nationally. In mathematics and science standards are judged to be below average at both seven and eleven. This indicates declining standards in mathematics at seven and eleven and in science at seven since the last inspection when compared with all schools. However, although the previous report judged science standards at seven to be average, the teacher assessments at that time showed them to be well below average, so in fact the current standards show a slight improvement since then. The indications are that the school has begun to raise standards, particularly in mathematics, following the dramatic dip in recent years.

5 Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall towards the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in reception and as infants so that they are much more confident with the language by the time they start as juniors where they make satisfactory progress.

6 Standards in English are broadly average by the age of seven and below average by eleven. In speaking and listening standards are broadly average throughout the school. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and to each other during lessons. Most take part in discussions although some need encouragement to contribute. In reading most seven-year-olds are competent and can work out the meanings of unknown words. Only the higher attaining pupils read with expression, however, and lower attaining pupils sometimes lack a clear understanding of what they have read even though they know what the individual words say. At eleven reading is a weakness. Too few pupils are confident in some of the more advanced reading skills like understanding what authors are implying in texts or finding and using information in private research. Writing presents a similar situation with seven-year-olds being appropriately competent but eleven-year-olds showing weaknesses. These often apply to accuracy, as when tenses in their writing do not agree or words are spelled incorrectly. Handwriting is poor throughout the school. Progress for the infants and pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language is broadly satisfactory. However progress of the juniors, particularly for the above average pupils, is not as fast as it should be.

7 Standards in mathematics are below average at seven and eleven. Although many pupils attain the expected levels, too few gain the higher than expected standards at this age. Pupils are beginning to acquire a sound understanding of basic number facts and they measure with increasing accuracy, but lower attaining pupils are still insecure in some of these areas and do not know the names of some common plane shapes. At eleven standards are below average but good teaching has enabled the school to turn the tide on declining standards and they are now beginning to rise again. A change in the way the school groups pupils into sets for mathematics lessons has helped, so that higher attaining pupils get the support they need to do well and pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language also receive appropriate support. Consequently most pupils make generally satisfactory progress through the school.

8 Standards in science are currently below average at both seven and eleven, which shows an improvement on last year's test results. By the time they are seven pupils have learned to observe closely, using magnifying glasses where appropriate and have a sound understanding of materials and how some change when they are heated. They know about simple circuits and electricity. By eleven pupils have built upon this foundation and make reasonable predictions, conduct simple experiments and record their findings.

9 Standards in ICT are below average at both seven and eleven as they were at the time of the last inspection. There has not been enough improvement since then. Standards are also below average in geography and music. This shows a decline in the standard of music and insufficient improvement in standards in geography since the last inspection. Standards in art and design, DT, history, PE and RE are average. Standards have improved therefore in art and PE at the age of eleven and in DT at seven.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10 Pupils' attitudes to school and to learning are good. Pupils are interested in what is being taught and enjoy coming to school. They rise to the challenge when teaching is demanding and enjoy practical tasks. This situation has been maintained since the time of the previous inspection. Pupils' positive attitudes were noted in a majority of lessons and this enhanced their learning. Pupils in a Year 1 science lesson enjoyed learning using magnifying glasses and pupils in a Year 3 geography lesson enhanced their learning through their enjoyment of looking at atlases and globes. Pupils are capable of working independently and concentrating on tasks. During a mathematics lesson in Year 3, pupils

applied themselves diligently when using a tally chart as one method of recording information and Year 5 pupils responded positively to the challenge of timed tasks. When required to present work on rainforests to the rest of the class, Year 6 pupils were seen confidently handling and organising their preparations. Inspectors saw pupils working well together during lessons, for example during ICT and science. Boys and girls worked co-operatively together during a Year 4 ICT lesson when they took turns to enter information and amicably shared computers. A significant number of parents responding to the questionnaire agree that their children like school and inspection findings confirm their views.

11 At the time of the last inspection behaviour was sound, and better in classrooms than around the school. This situation has improved and inspectors saw good behaviour in classrooms, in the playground and in the dining hall during lunchtimes. Pupils are aware of the standards of behaviour that are expected and meet those standards consistently, including when moving unsupervised around the school. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting agreed that the school encourages good behaviour. A significant number of parents responding to the questionnaire agree that behaviour in the school is good. Inspectors saw some deterioration in behaviour in lessons when the pace of teaching slowed and an undercurrent of restlessness developed. There have been sixteen exclusions in the last school year.

12 As at the time of the last inspection, pupils are keen to accept responsibility and willingly accept the opportunities offered to be part of the life of the school. The majority of pupils have responsibilities within their own classrooms and for keeping shared areas tidy. Pupils of all ages are involved as register monitors, in the distribution of the school's weekly newsletter and in reading their own prayers during assembly. Older pupils have duties and responsibilities around the school. These include preparing the hall before assembly, collating house points and showing visitors around the school. Pupils take these responsibilities seriously and handle them reliably and efficiently. The opportunities make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Inspectors saw Year 6 pupils using their initiative and moving sensibly into a position that gave a clear view of the screen when the overhead projector was being used. Inspectors were welcomed into the school by pupils who were consistently friendly and polite.

13 Relationships in the school are very good. Pupils were seen to have respect for the feelings and values of others, and this accords with the school's aims. Pupils in Year 4 were seen listening carefully to each other's views during a religious education lesson. There are good relationships between staff and pupils. In this atmosphere, pupils feel secure, confidently offering their contributions and making progress in their learning and personal development. In the main, pupils form very good relationships with each other, with teachers and with other adults. At the time of the last inspection, different ethnic groups in the school mixed well with each other. This situation has been maintained. During discussion with pupils from Year 6, inspectors were told 'There's no racism here'. No incidences of unkind behaviour were seen between pupils, and parents attending the pre-inspection meeting agreed that any such incidents are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils know complaints related to bullying are looked into and understand the consequences of unkindness or bullying through discussions in assemblies and 'circle time'¹. Pupils appreciate each other's successes and work well together co-operatively and collaboratively.

14 Attendance in the school is low when figures are compared to the national averages. The level of unauthorised absence is above that of the national average. Numbers have

¹ A session in which pupils take turns to discuss or participate in activities designed to raise their awareness of each other's feelings.

improved on occasions since the time of the previous inspection but the school has been unable to raise attendance figures consistently. There are a number of younger pupils who are persistently late for the start of the school day. These poor levels of attendance and punctuality are having a negative effect on these pupils' attainment and progress. Not all parents co-operate as well as they might in helping the school to improve the situation and some do not fulfil their responsibilities by ensuring pupils attend regularly and arrive promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15 Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. At the time of the last inspection teaching was judged to be satisfactory. However, at that time 16 per cent of lessons observed were judged to be less than satisfactory while during the current inspection that proportion has fallen to around five per cent. This indicates that the school has improved teaching by tackling those areas where it was particularly weak. At the time of the last inspection seven per cent of lessons were judged to be very good to excellent while on this occasion eight per cent came into that category, another slight improvement in teaching quality. The best teaching is at Year 6 and in mathematics and science where it is contributing to the rising standards. The weakest teaching is in ICT where it is unsatisfactory overall because too many teachers lack the confidence to teach it effectively.

16 Teaching in reception is satisfactory overall except for creative development where it is not good enough because it does not give children enough opportunities or support to develop their own ideas. Too often the learning of children in the reception classes is based upon the National Curriculum rather than upon the guidance for the Foundation Stage. Although the teachers do their best to modify the teaching to match the ages and aptitudes of the children, the lack of a properly planned curriculum in line with national guidance means that children do not advance as fast as they might despite the satisfactory quality of the teaching.

17 Teaching of both infants and juniors is generally satisfactory overall. However, as standards have been below average in English, mathematics and science recently, satisfactory teaching is not good enough to bring standards into line with others nationally. The weaknesses in teaching stem mainly from poor planning, expecting too little of pupils in terms of work and behaviour, and in the case of ICT a lack of knowledge and confidence in the subject. Consequently, in the lessons that were judged to be unsatisfactory pupils were not given work that was hard enough. For example in ICT Year 5 pupils spent too long repeating work on computers that they had already completed on paper in the classroom. In a literacy lesson in Year 1 the teacher praised pupils for mediocre work and behaviour and found it difficult to control the class so that the pace of learning slowed. In a geography lesson in Year 4 the planning was inadequate so that the pupils became noisy and too much time was lost on activities that did not take learning forward quickly enough. These lessons did not really engage the pupils' interest and motivate them into wanting to learn. The pace of learning was too slow and the teachers lacked the capacity to modify the lesson as it proceeded in order to capture the pupils' attention and improve the pace of learning. The analysis of pupils' work also illustrated some general weaknesses in teaching throughout the school. These included marking of work which ranges from being useful to non-existent. Where marking is useful it tells pupils what is good about their work and how to improve it. However too often the marking is not of this quality. Too many pieces of work are either not marked or leave the pupils with little idea of the strengths and weaknesses of their work. Comments on the work are generally positive even when the quality of the work does not merit such praise. Consequently lessons are not building effectively enough on what pupils have learned earlier. The quality of presentation is often not high enough but is accepted by the teachers. This includes the handwriting, which is a weakness in the school. Sometimes

the lesson plans are not precise enough at saying what pupils will learn, as in the case of the ICT lesson at Year 3 where they were to learn that “messages can be sent over distances”.

18 The best teaching is in mathematics and science, particularly, though not exclusively, at Year 6. Where teaching is very good lessons are well planned. Teachers are very clear about what pupils will learn and they share this with them at the start of the lesson. In mathematics, lessons follow the guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy closely and this helps to give teachers confidence in what they are teaching. Consequently learning is good and standards are beginning to rise. In a Year 6 maths lesson, for example, the teacher emphasised basic skills ensuring that pupils acquired a good knowledge of number facts and the capacity to recall them quickly and use them to solve problems. The teaching was confident with clear explanations and an expectation that pupils would work hard and do their best. The teacher used correct mathematical terminology and encouraged pupils to explain their thinking to the rest of the class. The lesson proceeded at a brisk pace so that it held the pupils’ attention and they were interested and well behaved. In science much the same applies. Teaching builds upon what pupils have learned earlier, as in a Year 6 lesson on the rain forest. The same features as in the very good maths lessons were evident and the lesson was organised so that pupils worked in teams and developed their social skills as well as their scientific ones. Science in a Year 1 class was also very well taught as pupils learned the correct terms for parts of a plant. Again, the teacher held their interest and moved the learning on at a brisk pace so that pupils stayed interested, motivated and well behaved. In most lessons teachers manage the behaviour of pupils effectively and ensure that they are well behaved.

19 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. They have individual education plans and are suitably supported in classes and through being withdrawn from lessons for small group support. Consequently they make satisfactory progress towards their targets. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported in reception and in Years 1 and 2. Consequently they learn quickly and make good progress. At Years 3 to 6 the level of support is lower as pupils become more confident with English and they make satisfactory progress in their learning.

20 The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented. The Numeracy Strategy is having a stronger impact on standards at the moment than the Literacy Strategy because that is where the school has had its greatest concerns and focused its efforts.

21 Some parents have expressed concerns over the amount and the consistency of homework. The inspection findings confirm the views of this group. The pupils are not receiving consistent amounts of homework appropriate for their age group and linked to what they are learning at school. Some parents have suggested using a separate homework book so that they can keep track of what homework their children are getting.

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

22 Overall, the quality and range of curricular opportunities provided by the school is satisfactory, but there are strengths and weaknesses within the provision. The school has taken care to ensure that the curriculum is relevant to pupils’ cultural and religious backgrounds. Topics are well chosen to reflect and endorse the importance of pupils’ cultural heritage, such as the specific focus on Jamaica in geography, Mary Seacole in history and traditional Indian dance in physical education. However, the curriculum for the reception children does not reflect closely enough the guidance for the Foundation Stage.

Currently planning for these children is based upon the National Curriculum for infant pupils and does not fully meet their needs. An excessive amount of time is allocated to English in both infant and junior classes, which amounts to a third of all teaching time and means less time for other subjects.

23 The issues identified for improvement from the previous inspection have been addressed successfully. The school now fully meets statutory requirements by providing appropriate learning activities for all the subjects of the National Curriculum and RE. Schemes of work and policies are in place for all subjects and teachers' planning is drawn from these documents. The unsatisfactory interpretation of the scheme of work in ICT by some less confident teachers means that pupils fail to make the required progress and do not reach average standards in the subject.

24 Generally, there is enough time to deliver the school curriculum for pupils of all ages but there is some loss of teaching time which decreases the opportunities for pupils to learn. The school makes a generous allocation of 25 minutes a day for assemblies but in reality these sessions last much longer because it takes a considerable time to assemble the whole school in the hall. Some classes, particularly those infant classes accommodated in the mobile classrooms on the playground, require additional time to complete their journeys. The setting arrangements in mathematics and writing are proving effective in raising standards. In these lessons, pupils of similar abilities in Years 5 and 6, 3 and 4 and 1 and 2 are taught together. This enables teachers to provide well matched, challenging work which promotes higher standards. There is some marginal loss of teaching time, however, as pupils move from one teaching venue to another or have to wait for one lesson to finish and another to begin.

25 The school has good, effective strategies for the teaching of numeracy skills. The whole school focus on raising standards in mathematics is having a positive impact, by pulling up standards from a low level. Teachers are far more confident and skilful. Pupils use their calculation skills well in a range of situations, such as in the opening mental mathematics session, in problem solving and in the use of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

26 The National Literary Strategy has been introduced successfully and is properly in place. A generous allocation of time is given to English which limits the time available for other subjects. This particularly affects music and geography, where, because of the small amount of teaching time, standards at the end of Year 6 are below average. In the case of music it is as little as half an hour a week. The school is beginning to address this issue and has begun to explore ways of increasing the literacy content of lessons in other subjects and so reducing the time spent on timetabled English. There are one or two promising developments already, especially in history, where literacy skills are being promoted well.

27 The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits into the local and wider community. The school also has many visitors who stimulate pupils' interest and provide exciting experiences that develop pupils' learning. At some stage in their education at St James pupils have opportunities to visit Birmingham Art Gallery and Museum, Soho House (the former home of Matthew Boulton), Money Lane Farm, the Botanical Gardens, Birmingham Cathedral and Walsall Leather Museum in connection with their class topics. In addition there is a three-day residential course to the Woodlands Centre for Year 4 pupils. This builds confidence and improves pupils' social skills in the background of a challenging outdoor environment. A number of theatre groups visit school and local football clubs provide coaching sessions periodically. Speakers from different religious backgrounds visit school to lead assemblies, which helps to broaden pupils' cultural and religious understanding. Recently, the school has forged a good link with the local fire station in order

to underline the importance of punctuality. The school also provides a sound range of lunchtime and after-school activities, which enhances pupils' learning experiences. These cover sport, music, art and cultural activities such as the Punjabi Club. Although a minority of parents criticised the number of such after-school clubs and activities, the school provides as many as can be expected.

28 Pupils' personal, social and health education is well supported. An appropriate weekly slot on the timetable is given to circle time, when pupils are encouraged to discuss their feelings and concerns in an open and secure environment. Through a set programme, adopted by the school, teachers give pupils guidance as they explore personal and social issues. Teachers skilfully use the daily events and activities of school life to bring relevance to circle time sessions and reinforce the values of positive relationships and morality.

29 The school promotes a healthy life-style through its curriculum provision. Pupils are made aware of the importance of healthy eating, hygiene and regular physical exercise in science and physical education lessons. There is a structured programme of the teaching of drug awareness and sex education and parents are properly informed of the lesson content. These learning experiences build a good platform for pupils' future development in adult life.

30 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Each pupil has an individual education plan which clearly defines achievable targets and how they are to be supported. These are reviewed regularly and new targets set. Class teachers have copies of the plans so that work can be matched to the pupils' needs. Parents are invited to reviews and targets are always shared with them. Recently pupils have become involved in setting targets. Most parents support their children's learning needs at home.

31 The school has built very good, constructive relationships with local schools, colleges and other organisations. It has good systems for integrating children from nursery and playgroups into reception classes and the liaison with local secondary schools for transfer at the age of 11 is also well established. Very good links with the University of Central England have been forged. In addition to the usual annual placement of students for teaching practice, the School of Architecture undertakes projects in design and technology with groups of older pupils. This provides pupils with expert advice in small groups to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of design processes. The school encourages and supports pupils to participate in the Children's University, which takes place at a neighbouring school during term time on each Saturday morning. Although this is not exclusively for talented and gifted pupils, it encourages the more able pupils to reach their full academic potential.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

32 Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils are given regular opportunities to reflect on spiritual experiences in assembly. Although the discomfort of sitting close together in an overcrowded hall is not altogether conducive to contemplation, the school makes the best of its situation. Prayers used are effectively related to the theme of the week and include examples from different faiths. The pupils also use the school prayer from time to time. Prayer is studied in religious education lessons, and these sessions also include chances to consider personal responses to belief. Occasional situations encourage pupils to experience awe and wonder, such as watching the progress of coloured liquid through the celery stem in a science lesson. The school has identified planning such opportunities as an area for development, and teachers have recently received training in this, so there is a growing awareness of how to create situations to enhance spiritual development.

33 Provision for social development is good. There are regular opportunities for pupils to work together in lessons. In a Year 3 and 4 numeracy lesson, for instance, they challenged each other in pairs to count on and back in steps of six. The value of working together is actively taught in personal, social and health education lessons and through circle time. In Year 2, for instance, pupils work as a group to complete a jigsaw puzzle, learning the value of sharing, discussing and including everyone. Other Year 2 pupils enjoy a 'circle time' game in which pupils ask classmates to sit next to them. Pupils have a suitable range of responsibilities such as being door monitors, distributing books and taking the register to the office. They learn to consider less fortunate people through supporting charities. Regular discussions in religious education lessons encourage pupils to discuss relationships and to learn to value friendship and co-operation.

34 Provision for moral development is very good. The school ethos promotes a very strong moral code. Assembly themes, wall displays and regular discussions in lessons make pupils well aware of what is right and wrong and actively encourage attributes like doing one's best, aiming high, honesty and fairness. Teachers reinforce these by involving pupils in producing their own class rules, and through personal, social and health education and religious education lessons. Circumstances in which personal conduct is considered are planned so that pupils can think about their responses to particular situations. In Year 2, for instance, pupils decide how they can speak respectfully and then manage to tell the teacher politely she has made a mistake on the board. More challenging moral issues, such as whether it can ever be acceptable to beat children are discussed. In a Year 5 literacy lesson, this issue was discussed in the context of studying a text on Greek mythology.

35 Provision for cultural development is very good. Within the curriculum there are appropriate opportunities for pupils to listen to music and to study the work of well-known artists. PE lessons provide a variety of creative dance in response to different styles of music, including traditional Irish dancing. Other cultures are considered in history, geography and DT lessons. In RE pupils study the major world faiths and their important celebrations. These festivals are also enjoyed during assemblies, and wall displays celebrate past experiences such as Vaisakhi, Divali, Eid and Easter. Visitors to the school also enhance cultural development. For instance, a group of pupils from another school danced for Chinese New Year, and a visiting cellist and sitar player played a variety of music. Theatre groups, an artist and a visiting writer have also recently been involved. Pupils have also attended the Symphony Hall both as performers and audience. A wide range of music is played during assembly. Pupils have a valuable opportunity to attend a Punjabi club. All pupils have a range of rich experiences to enable them to appreciate each other's cultures as well as some of those not represented in the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36 The school takes good care of its pupils. The last inspection judged care to be effective so standards have been maintained since then. The procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good and all staff are aware of named personnel and procedures. Policies are in line with local procedures. The school has two members of staff qualified in first aid and a rota of first aiders for playtimes and lunchtime is displayed next to the first aid boxes. All the necessary procedures are in place for dealing with minor accidents or incidents. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy. The headteacher monitors health and safety issues and carries out regular audits and risk assessments. Governors are aware of the need to provide a safe and secure environment for pupils and staff.

37 Supervision at lunchtime is satisfactorily organised by a team of seventeen supervisors, including a playleader who organises games for the pupils. Supervisors meet with the headteacher on a fortnightly basis to discuss issues and observations and this helps to ensure that lunchtimes run smoothly. Lunchtime staff are aware of the school's behaviour policy although they use their own system of 'time out' for those pupils who do not observe the rules for dinnertime and playtime. In the main, lunchtimes are happy and organised occasions. Pupils treat supervisors with politeness and courtesy.

38 The school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring absence and lateness and has tried several appropriate strategies for encouraging those pupils who are consistently absent or late in arriving. These have met with limited success. There have been some improvements in attendance particularly amongst older pupils although punctuality still remains an issue across the school and particularly with younger pupils. Although figures have improved, a significant number of pupils still arrive late for school each day, disadvantaging their own learning and disrupting their classmates. The school is working closely with the education welfare officer to promote regular attendance and punctuality. Parents are made aware of their responsibilities through the school's prospectus and there are appropriately worded reminders in the weekly newsletter. The school has recently started to give half-termly rewards for 100 per cent attendance and punctuality which the pupils appreciate.

39 The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Parents are aware of the standards of behaviour that are expected and the consequences of misconduct through the 'encouraging positive behaviour' booklet. All parents receive a copy of this booklet that explains the strategies used at the school to teach and encourage positive behaviour. Good behaviour is consistently encouraged and rewarded in a variety of ways that includes house points, stickers that are collected on a card and certificates. In the main, inspectors saw good behaviour consistently recognised and rewarded with praise and house points so that pupils were encouraged to work hard and succeed. Pupils told inspectors that there is no real bullying and when minor incidents occur the school deals with them quickly and effectively. The school's anti-bullying strategies are effective. Members of staff know their pupils well and monitor their personal development in an informal way. The school does not have in place a systematic way of recording pupils' personal development as part of, for example, the personal, social and health education programme or the school's assessment processes.

40 The school has satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress. When children enter the school in the reception classes their attainment levels are checked and pupils in Years 2 and 6 undertake all statutory assessments in English, mathematics and science. The school also carries out a range of additional tests in English and mathematics in Years 3, 4 and 5, writing assessments, reading, spelling and 'end of topic' tests. The school is beginning to use its analysis of assessment results to set targets and monitor the achievement of different groups of pupils, but much of this work is in its infancy. The school has strengths in the way it compares its performance with schools locally and nationally and sets targets for improvement. It also carefully monitors results by gender and ethnicity, and takes effective action to provide additional support where weaknesses have been identified. The information gained from testing is used well to identify and support pupils with special educational needs, to 'set' for English and mathematics and to provide 'booster' lessons for pupils in these two subjects.

41 There are considerable variations in the way in which the information gathered is used to guide the curriculum and to raise standards, but overall it is unsatisfactory. Assessment information is used particularly well in mathematics where the curriculum leader analyses the tests by question, identifies areas of weakness and teachers' planning

is adjusted to overcome these problems. As a result of this work standards are beginning to rise in this subject. The information gained from the analysis of English tests is not being used as effectively to build on pupils' learning, however. For example, where weaknesses have been identified in spelling and handwriting, effective action has not been taken to tackle the issues. Pupils are provided with regular writing tests, but the information gained from these could be used more effectively. Targets for improvement are set for individuals and groups of pupils, but these are often too broad and do not identify specifically enough where improvement is needed. There are other weaknesses in this area of the school's work. For example, there is no thorough analysis of the science tests that pupils take in Years 2 and 6 and so the school is unaware of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in this subject. Pupils' achievements are now being recorded in some form in all subjects, but in most cases this is a new initiative and its effectiveness in raising standards is not yet proven.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42 There is a good partnership between parents and the school. Parents' views of the school are very positive, as they were at the time of the last inspection, and the school continues to work hard to promote an effective relationship with parents. A significant majority of parents responding to the questionnaire agree the school works closely with them. Parents receive good quality information. There are frequent letters for parents and a weekly newsletter that is presented in a readable and informative style. There is a well-presented school prospectus which is updated annually. It contains all essential information, including the school's attitude and approach to incidents of bullying and details of ways in which the school communicates with parents. Newsletters of a high quality of presentation and content are sent home on a weekly basis. Newsletters provide parents with information and contain reminders of parents' responsibility in ensuring their children arrive punctually at school.

43 The contribution of parents to children's learning is limited and few help in school although they are encouraged to come into school as volunteers. Parents support the school by helping to supervise children going swimming and on school trips. The school has participated in a number of initiatives aimed at involving parents in the life of the school that have included opportunities for their own educational development so that they value education. The vast majority of parents have signed the home school agreement although the agreement has not been shared with parents of children in the two reception classes. The agreement has strengthened the cooperation between parents and staff.

44 Parents responding to the questionnaire felt well informed about how their child is getting on. There are three formal parents meetings each year where there is an opportunity for parents to look at their child's work. The school carefully monitors attendance at these meetings and parents who are unable to attend are invited through the 'Tuesday News' to make another appointment. At these meetings, parents can ask questions about their child's targets for the forthcoming term and discuss progress against those of the previous term. A sample of reports that were scrutinised by inspectors contained a thorough and systematic record of pupils' progress, some information on personal and social development and comments on pupils' success or otherwise in meeting their targets. The arrangements for the setting of homework and the type of tasks pupils may be expected to do at home are part of the homework policy that has been shared with parents. Inspectors saw some good practice of homework being set in line with the policy, but this practice was not consistent across the school. The paragraph on homework in the school's prospectus mentions the use of reading or homework diaries. However, inspectors found little evidence of the use of these diaries as a means of involving parents in the work their children undertake at home. A significant number of parents responding to the questionnaire expressed dissatisfaction

with the amount of work their child has to do at home. The school could usefully investigate the reasons for this dissatisfaction. Inspectors saw examples of investigative work done at home by older pupils in projects based on a religious education topic.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45 Overall leadership and management are satisfactory. The previous report said that leadership was good and management sound and that is still the case. The head has a clear view of the kind of school he wants to develop and shares this with the governors and staff. He has introduced a large number of processes and procedures, including delegating management tasks to senior staff but not all those with responsibilities have the management skills to be effective in their roles yet. Too much emphasis is placed on the management processes being developed rather than on how they help pupils to learn better. The senior management team is an example of an innovation that has not yet had a significant impact on standards, but there are signs that its recent changes in the way pupils are organised for mathematics is beginning to raise standards after two or three years when they were declining. Similarly the school has developed a lot of ways of monitoring teaching and learning in English and mathematics but they are only now beginning to influence standards. However the monitoring of other subjects, like ICT, geography and music, has not been good enough so that standards in these areas are unacceptably low. While the school has made some improvement in this area since the last inspection it has not gone far enough in the time it has had.

46 The previous report had as a key issue the development of the role of subject coordinators and senior staff. While roles have been developed, and in some subjects include monitoring teaching and learning, the development of the staff to fit the wider roles has not been as successful. Consequently the school has staff who require some extra training in the management skills needed to fulfil their enhanced roles. For example, not all those with subject responsibilities have received training in the skills required to be fully effective subject coordinators. Some senior staff have received training in performance management to enable them to evaluate the performance of staff and set them performance targets in line with the school's policy and priorities. The performance management policy reflects the national guidance and meets requirements.

47 The co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs is very experienced and conscientious. She has kept up to date with changes in the Code of Practice. She makes very good use of the local Pupil Support Service and other relevant external support agencies. All pupil records are kept up to date. She manages the support staff well so that they are effective in working with pupils. Learning support assistants are given good opportunities to develop their skills through further training. Modifications have been made to the school building to help a visually impaired pupil.

48 Although the previous inspection report says that governors were effective it also included a key issue about developing their role in monitoring teaching and learning and ensuring progression in pupils' learning. The current governing body is effective in its leadership and management role, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Governors have a clear understanding of how to check the school's performance in the annual national tests for seven and eleven-year-olds. They study the results in comparison with results nationally and with those of similar schools. Consequently they are aware of the school's priorities in these subjects. They are less secure on progress in other subjects, but given that the subject coordinators are also insecure in some cases this is hardly surprising. Governors are proud of the way the school encompasses such a range of cultural backgrounds in such a harmonious way as this is key to the kind of school they wish to belong to. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well. They have established a clear

committee structure to increase the efficiency of their meetings and are keen to hold the school to account for its performance. They are involved heavily in devising the school development plan and in managing and overseeing the school finances. Those with particular responsibilities for liaising with individual members of staff, like the governor with oversight of special needs for example, take their duties seriously and work hard to fulfil them.

49 The school aims emphasise the caring, sharing nature that underpins all that the school tries to achieve and are reflected in its work. They illustrate the school's commitment to providing equality of opportunity for all pupils and the school is analysing the results of national tests to check that no group of pupils is inadvertently overlooked. The quality of relationships between pupils, staff, governors and parents show how well the school is able to include both genders and all cultural and social backgrounds and abilities in a happy and harmonious community. The air of mutual respect regardless of background is a key element in the good relationships throughout the school.

50 The school development plan is satisfactory overall. It includes, in some sections, clear targets for raising standards by given proportions but in other sections the focus is on procedures rather than how implementing the procedures will raise standards. An example is in ICT where the aim is "extending the use of ICT as a learning resource" rather than raising standards in ICT by extending its use as a learning resource.

51 Financial management is good. The governors and the head have a clear understanding of the need to set the budget to meet the school's identified priorities and to challenge the need for particular spending in the first place. They are conscious of the need to consult on spending decisions, to get the best price they can and to compare the school's performance with others. The senior management team and the governors monitor spending regularly and the bursar runs the day-to-day accounting systems very efficiently. The school is good at identifying and using funds for specific purposes and is currently involved in a scheme involving public and private sector funding for building improvements. The large carry-forward relates to funds set aside for building improvements. Funds allocated for specific purposes, including those for pupils with special educational needs, are used appropriately. Overall the school provides satisfactory value for money.

52 The accommodation is unsatisfactory, including as it does temporary buildings in the playgrounds, and no grassed areas. The Foundation Stage outside area is inadequate and needs to be improved to enable the school to meet the requirements of the guidance for outside play for children in reception. Improving the quality of the building was a key issue in the last inspection report and the school has made some improvements but still has a long way to go. The hall is cramped when the whole school meets for assembly, for example. The temporary classrooms in the playgrounds mean that pupils spend a lot of time moving between buildings for assemblies and lessons in the hall or computer suite. These issues are being addressed through the proposed building project. The school still needs to address the issue of pupils' toilets being unpleasant and smelly.

53 The school has an adequate number of suitably qualified teaching and support staff. It has a good system for supporting staff new to the school, including newly qualified teachers. While it is committed to the continuing professional development of staff it could be more methodical and rigorous in assessing training needs and seeking solutions to them. This would enable staff to fulfil their responsibilities more effectively and should mean that subject leaders would become more effective in their enhanced roles and raise standards throughout the school.

54 While resources for learning are generally satisfactory there are some strengths and weaknesses. The school is well equipped for ICT and for pupils with special educational needs. However the resources for the Foundation Stage are inadequate and there are not enough good quality books in English.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55 Raise standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT by:
(Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 84, 86, 92, 93, 98, 99, 104, 106, 107, 137, 138.)

Making teaching more consistently good throughout the school through:

- Raising the expectations among all teachers of what pupils are able to achieve, and in the quality of presentation of finished work, including handwriting;
- Better marking of pupils' work that tells them clearly what is good and what they should do to improve their work;
- Giving appropriate amounts of homework more consistently throughout the school.
- More frequent and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning;
- Using other subjects more frequently and consistently to teach and practise skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT to create more balance between the various subjects;
- Meeting pupils' learning needs through more adventurous teaching rather than following schemes to the letter;
- Better use of assessment to establish what pupils need to know to make faster progress and to set clear targets for improvement;
- Improving teachers subject knowledge where it is weak.

(Paragraphs 15, 17, 21, 23, 42, 45, 67, 79, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 96, 97, 102, 103, 109, 110, 111, 126, 139, 140.)

Improving provision for the Foundation Stage by:

- Revising the Foundation Stage curriculum to reflect more closely the current national guidance;
- Improving resources for learning for children in reception classes;
- Improving the facilities and resources for outdoor activities for children in reception.

(Paragraphs 16, 22, 52, 54, 61, 63, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80.)

Working with parents, pupils and education welfare officers to improve attendance and punctuality by:

- Making clear to parents the effect of absences and lateness on their child's standards of work and national test results;
- Providing incentives to pupils to encourage them to arrive regularly and on time each day;
- Taking firmer action against the small number of parents who allow their children to stay away from school unnecessarily.

(Paragraphs 14, 38)

Minor issues

56 As well as the key issues outlined above the school should also consider raising standards in geography and music.

(Paragraphs 9, 123, 127, 128, 129, 130, 141)

The provision for and standards achieved by pupils with English as an additional language

57 Sixty-six per cent of pupils in the school speak English as an additional language. The school makes good provision for pupils in Key Stage 1 whose first language is not English, and they make good progress. Support for pupils in Key Stage 2 is barely sufficient, but the school uses its limited resources to target those pupils who are seen to have the greatest need. They make satisfactory progress.

58 Teaching and the work of support assistants are good in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are assessed on admission to the school, using appropriate resources. Bilingual speakers are used whenever possible to establish a base level or to help identify specific needs. The teacher with responsibility for this area plans collaboratively with class teachers to ensure that all pupils receive the same curriculum, and is timetabled to give regular support to groups and sets where the need is greatest. This is generally to support the teaching of literacy, numeracy and science. Adults work through the planned tasks with pupils carefully, sometimes translating into mother tongue languages, and then focussing on key vocabulary and concepts. Where possible specific ethnic groups are targeted for additional language support when identified through monitoring class records, but girls from Pakistani families continue to underachieve in Year 2. Satisfactory records of progress are kept, and there are good links with the special needs co-ordinator.

59 Junior age pupils are satisfactorily supported by class teachers and teaching assistants. There is rarely any specific planning related to individual needs for the older pupils and there is evidence of some stark differences in the achievement of girls from Indian families in Year 6 compared with the other pupils in their year group. The school recognises this but does not have the resources to address this issue satisfactorily. Sometimes pupils are given unsuitable activities to do such as reading books with an inappropriate interest level when it would be more beneficial for them to join a group discussion with their classmates.

60 The teacher and some support staff are funded by the local education authority and by national grant. A home/school worker, also funded by the local authority, provides an after-school club where pupils may learn Punjabi, and offers support to newly-arrived families as well as working in Year 2 each day. The school provides resources which are satisfactory. The bilingual labels on displays around the school reflect the cultural mix of the community.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 77 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 28 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 0 | 6 | 29 | 38 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 0 | 8 | 38 | 49 | 5 | 0 | 0 |

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | YR-Y6 |
|---|-------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 410 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 139 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | YR-Y6 |
|---|-------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 8 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 82 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 270 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 20 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 26 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 5.5 |
| National comparative data | 5.6 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 1.6 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2001 | 27 | 32 | 59 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 22 | 25 | 24 |
| | Girls | 26 | 27 | 27 |
| | Total | 48 | 52 | 51 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 81 (83) | 88 (85) | 86 (75) |
| | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 24 | 24 | 23 |
| | Girls | 27 | 27 | 27 |
| | Total | 51 | 51 | 50 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 86 (82) | 86 (78) | 85 (78) |
| | National | 85 (84) | 89 (88) | 89 (88) |

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

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

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2001 | 29 | 31 | 60 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 22 | 19 | 26 |
| | Girls | 23 | 14 | 23 |
| | Total | 45 | 33 | 49 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 75 (73) | 55 (63) | 82 (71) |
| | National | 75 (75) | 71 (72) | 87 (85) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 21 | 20 | 26 |
| | Girls | 19 | 15 | 21 |
| | Total | 40 | 35 | 47 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 67 (71) | 58 (59) | 78 (64) |
| | National | 72 (70) | 74 (72) | 82 (79) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 77 |
| Black – African heritage | 2 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 163 |
| Pakistani | 36 |
| Bangladeshi | 13 |
| Chinese | 1 |
| White | 19 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 44 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y6

| | |
|--|-------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 18.06 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 22.8 |
| Average class size | 29.3 |

Education support staff: YR-Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 17 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 377 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|-----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 1 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 3.4 |
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 11 | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 | 0 |
| Indian | 2 | 0 |
| Pakistani | 1 | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 |
| White | 0 | 0 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 2 | 0 |

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

Financial information

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year | 2001-2002 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 1,099,490 |
| Total expenditure | 1,011,763 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,467 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 149,322 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 87,727 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 410 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 220 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 67 | 28 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 54 | 41 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 53 | 39 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 31 | 36 | 21 | 10 | 2 |
| The teaching is good. | 58 | 37 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 51 | 40 | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 64 | 31 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 69 | 27 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 53 | 39 | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 65 | 29 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 62 | 34 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 37 | 40 | 12 | 4 | 7 |

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

61 The quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage gives pupils a satisfactory start to some aspects of their education. The warm and caring atmosphere provided by the staff ensures that children feel valued and secure. The teaching and learning of children in the reception classes enable most pupils to make good progress in learning to write and in personal and social development and sound progress in mathematical and physical development during their first year in school. They are likely to achieve the early learning goals in these areas (the standards expected by the time children enter Year 1) by the end of that year, which is much the same as indicated in the previous inspection report. Higher achieving children are likely to exceed the goals in some areas. Overall, however, the curriculum provided is unsuitable for children of this age, and is limiting progress because it is not made sufficiently relevant to their learning needs. The children could achieve more in all learning areas. A broader and less formal daily routine would enable them to develop a firmer base to their learning, and to retain more knowledge and understanding as a foundation to future development. The school does not give appropriate status to this key stage. Co-ordination is included with Years 1 and 2, and planning for children's learning is also included in that for the infants. In consequence, assessments of children's progress are rooted in procedures more suited to the learning of older pupils, and do not focus sufficiently on the key needs of four-year-olds.

62 Children are admitted to the reception classes in September following their fourth birthday, for full-time education. There is a sensitive induction process, and satisfactory contact with the many pre-school providers, enabling the school to gain some knowledge of children's earlier learning levels.

63 The quality of teaching in the reception classes is satisfactory overall with some good elements. It is unsatisfactory in the area of creative development. Key learning in personal and social development and speaking and listening is well promoted, but only the higher attaining children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in all areas of learning. This is because the management and organisation of pupils' learning is generally not appropriate for the needs of children of this age. Too much emphasis is placed on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, leaving too little time in the school day for pupils to deepen their understanding by experiencing a range of good quality structured play activities. The curriculum is predominantly planned from the National Curriculum and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, rather than the guidance specifically developed for children in the Foundation Stage. Although there are appropriate adaptations made to the wording of planning and assessments, the organisation of tasks and activities during the school day in reception is such that children spend long periods of time sitting listening on the carpet. Generally the whole class is engaged in the same learning at the same time, rather than groups of children being given opportunities to explore a variety of structured activities alongside focussed tasks taught by adults. Children often undertake unsuitable activities that are too easy or too difficult for them, such as mathematics worksheets that are either finished very quickly or completed incorrectly, with no adult guidance on what to do next. Each day there is poor use of time as children wait their turn in school routines such as preparing for lunchtime. Over a school week this significantly reduces children's opportunities for developing their learning across a range of areas, including those of independence, exploration, imaginative and creative development.

64 Many children enter the school with attainment that is below that expected for children of this age, particularly in communication skills and personal development. This is

confirmed by the early assessments carried out in their first few weeks in school. Half the children in the current reception year speak English as an additional language, including two who are newly arrived in this country. They have effective bilingual support in the classroom enabling them to make good progress. A small number of children have special educational needs. They are quickly identified and given appropriate classroom support that is having a positive impact on their learning, and their progress is satisfactory.

Personal and social development

65 Although attainment is below average in this area when children enter the school, most of them are admitted with a positive and confident attitude, able to take full advantage of the secure and caring environment created by the staff. There is generally good teaching and support in this area in both classes, establishing warm relationships that help children build on their social experiences. Adults provide good role models for children and this caring ethos is reflected in the children's dealings with each other. As they move through the reception year most children develop in self-confidence, showing a good attitude to learning. Some children appear very passive and only contribute when necessary, however. Most are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area by the time they move to Year 1, although opportunities for developing appropriate independence in learning are limited because tasks are not always suitable. For example, children were asked to identify numbers greater than ten by circling them on a worksheet. Several children circled all the numbers on the sheet, while others finished the task very quickly. All the group then sat waiting for their next instruction. There was no guidance for those who were unable to do the task, and no provision for those who finished quickly. At other times the staff ensure that every child is included, making all children feel valued and comfortable. The use of mother-tongue support promotes children's security well, and children show a respectful awareness of each other's cultures. All children are able to join the rest of the school at playtime and lunchtime, and in daily assemblies in the school hall, further reinforcing their sense of community.

66 Children separate easily from their parents or carers each morning, settling quickly to the registration routine with eager anticipation. Most show good concentration and perseverance throughout the day, and all are very well behaved in the classroom and around the school. They are good at tidying up, as soon as the teacher asks them to, with very little fuss. Circle time sessions are used well to promote self-esteem, and are effective in identifying for children the qualities that make individuals 'special'. However, despite their worthwhile nature these sessions are too long, and add to the daily tally of time spent sitting on the carpet listening and taking turns. Opportunities to explore outside the classroom are very limited at present because of the lack of suitable outdoor provision. There is very little challenge available where children might learn to take appropriate risks. All children are confidently able to join the rest of the school at playtimes and lunchtimes, however.

Communication, language and literacy

67 Most children make satisfactory progress overall in this area of learning during their reception year. There is a heavy emphasis on speaking and listening and writing, which are school priorities for the development of learning. While this enables reception children to demonstrate key skills in those areas such as correct letter formation by the time they move to Year 1, their understanding of language and the written word is limited. Higher attaining children are already achieving the early learning goals for this area, but most other children in the class are unlikely to do so in reading, speaking and in the content of their writing. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, expectations of children's learning are inappropriate for most of the year group because ideas are taught to the whole class. The national guidance is not sufficiently used in these sessions or in the tasks provided for

independent work. Consequently children are not always able to achieve the learning objectives for the lesson.

68 All the children listen very attentively to their teachers at all times. Specific sessions are timetabled to promote opportunities for children to develop confidence and skill in speaking English, particularly where it is not their mother tongue, and most children make good progress in this. Teachers provide good examples of spoken English, for instance when talking about holiday activities. This enables the more confident children to answer in clearly spoken sentences about, for example, a cousin's birthday party, one child adding that 'when it was night time I went skating'. Every child is expected to offer a contribution. Bilingual assistants provide effective support and some necessary encouragement of good behaviour as the pace of these sessions is sometimes very slow. Children wait patiently for their turn. Many are able to use the confidence and learning from these sessions in their interaction with other children, talking happily about their own experiences as they begin a writing task. However, there are few opportunities for role-play experiences during the week, when children could use their negotiating skills in planning and developing play sequences. Home-corner provision is shabby and untidy and is rarely used as a focus for learning with structured adult support. Play equipment is used as an activity to occupy children while adults concentrate on the teaching of core skills in literacy and numeracy.

69 All the children enjoy sharing books, and listen well to stories. Most are able to recognise their own and others' names, and half the children are able to select specific words from the word board on the wall. Children use a pointer to indicate which word they require. These boards are a stimulating method of promoting word recognition, but are placed too high for safe use. Once children are settled into school they are given a reading book to take home each day. The higher achieving children are able to use their good knowledge of letter sounds to build unfamiliar words in their reading, and are able to recognise a wide range of words by sight. They talk freely about the pictures and story they are reading. Although they can recall stories well, they use the words of the text rather than their own interpretation, and some confuse the role of author with that of illustrator. All but the lowest achieving children are able to read familiar home-reading books confidently, but many have difficulty in understanding the text. This is sometimes because the reading material is unsuitable, for example 'Meanies drive a tin of beans' is not easy to explain even with the help of illustrations. They read each book over a period of several days and progress is recorded in a home-reading diary which contains a little guidance to parents such as 're-read' or 'practise words'. They make satisfactory progress in the mechanics of reading, but there is too much emphasis throughout the reception year on the more formal elements of teaching at the expense of exploratory, active learning, and children sit for overlong whole-class sessions.

70 By the end of the year over half the reception children are able to write simple sentences unaided, and higher achieving children are confident in their use of simple punctuation. Writing sessions are regularly included in the timetable as they are for the rest of the school. These lessons often follow on from the literacy hour for the day, giving children a very limited diet of learning. There is good modelling of the required structure, for example, 'I went to a party. I went to Sea Life. I went to my auntie's', and children repeat their intended sentences before attempting to write them. There is good support for children with special needs and for those who do not speak English as their first language. Children use the 'word wall' to help them spell common words. However, the time spent on the carpet preparing for the writing session is too long, often leaving too little opportunity for most children to complete their writing as effectively as they might. Because all children attempt the same activity at the same time, there are many missed opportunities to address individual learning needs. There are no writing resources available in play routines in the classroom where children could practise their writing skills independently and in different

contexts, such as 'letters' to a friend, or 'orders' at a class café. Writing activities are often a response to a specific literacy need, overlooking the developmental needs of the children. However, by the end of the reception year, most children can form their letters well and know that writing carries meaning to the reader.

Mathematical development

71 On admission to school most of the children have average attainment in mathematical learning. They all make satisfactory progress during their reception year and most are likely to achieve or exceed the early learning goals by the time they move to Year 1, particularly in number. Teaching is satisfactory in both classes, although planned tasks are not always suitable. Expectations of achievement for higher attaining pupils are sometimes too low, and too high for lower achieving children. Some activities are not principally about mathematics, but focus children's attention on other learning such as cutting and sticking skills. For example, a worksheet where children had to cut out small rectangles containing number names and put in an appropriate set caused children to drop their bits of paper and lose concentration before they could complete the activity. But the children generally enjoy their lessons and are able to explain their learning confidently. They know how to put numbers to ten in the correct sequence and most recognise numbers to twenty. They understand number terms from first to fifth and there is good use made of practical apparatus to reinforce mathematical concepts such as 'more' and 'less'. The children know some number rhymes and sing them with enthusiasm, such as *Five Little Ducks* and *Five Currant Buns*.

72 The teacher with specific responsibility for English as an additional language assists effectively with assessments when children are first admitted, and they and children with special educational needs are targeted for additional help which enables them to make satisfactory progress. Teaching assistants and bilingual workers give appropriate and effective support.

73 There are some suitable opportunities during the year to learn about shape and many children can recognise the difference between a circle and a triangle. The children have been introduced to the concepts of time and measurement, but many are confused by unfamiliar terminology such as centimetres before they have grasped what 'big' and 'little' mean. There is an overuse of worksheets during the reception year which is limiting opportunities to reinforce the learning of mathematical language in a practical context, and too formal a structure to mathematics lessons.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74 Children are admitted to reception with a wide variety of learning, but many lack the language and experience to build effectively on that knowledge. The curriculum provided does not address these needs sufficiently as it is too limited and narrowly focussed on developing concepts more suited to the learning of older children. Consequently, only the higher achieving children are likely to achieve the early learning goals in this area by the end of the reception year, although the quality of teaching is generally satisfactory.

75 Opportunities are provided for children to investigate objects and materials and to use their senses in sorting and classifying them. Children are able to describe different fruits and vegetables in their recent topic work, for example when writing about lemons – 'it feels like a lime, it smells like an orange' – reflecting some good questioning and guidance by their teachers. They are able to sequence pictures about making jellies and chocolate crispy cakes, and to sort small swatches of material into sets for winter or summer weather. Higher achieving children are able to write about the features of such sorting, that 'When it's hot if

you wear winter fabric you feel hot, like a warm woolly jumper, thick.’ Adults record the discussion of other children as they prompt them in their exploration. A lesson about biscuits enabled children to think about similarities and differences in the colour, texture, smell and shape of different biscuits, but there is little opportunity to follow this learning up by children discovering things for themselves with adults giving structured support and encouragement. Other activities provided alongside the session on biscuits gave children opportunities to explore independently the nature of how things work in various construction and creative tasks, but there was no development of the learning involved by planned adult intervention. Children have learned about the passage of time through talking about their families and sequencing pictures to show the growth of a baby through childhood to adulthood. However, much of the recording of experiences in this area of learning demands skills of a higher order than is appropriate for children of this age. Visits to a nearby store and farm give children good opportunities to learn about their local area, as they discover the fun of pizza-making, and look at the farm animals. But many of the children are unable to name the animals they saw or to find the language to recall the visits. There are plans to improve the outdoor area so that children can explore the environment safely and effectively, but at present there is little opportunity to discover the natural world independently.

76 Most of the children are able to use the mouse to guide the cursor on a computer, and many make good use of appropriate programs such as ‘Buttons’ to support their learning. At times however, one child from a small group dominates the computer while others sit and watch passively. A few children listen to taped stories, operating the tape recorder themselves.

Physical development

77 Most of the children are already achieving the early learning goals in this area. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good development of skills to improve performance in one reception class, but lessons are very formal and give children little opportunity to develop their imagination. All the children show good pencil control and are adept at using scissors. Self-portraits displayed on the wall show care and control with the chalks used, producing a pleasing and recognisable outcome. Fridge magnets of clay fruits had been shaped with precision and painted carefully as part of a recent topic. The children are able to join construction equipment to make interesting models, and show dexterity when placing objects such as plastic animals into small spaces. They manage buttons and zips on their clothing well without adult help.

78 There are satisfactory opportunities for energetic exercise in the regular PE lessons in the hall, and during the short outdoor sessions using wheeled toys. Both classes show appropriate levels of physical prowess as they pedal, run, jump and hop, and the children are able to adjust their speed to avoid others, changing direction quickly and using space well. Outdoor equipment is very limited, with no opportunities for children to develop climbing and balancing skills as they play. Teachers encourage children to understand the changes in their bodies when they undertake exercise, but some warm-up and cool-down sessions are not as effective as they might be because they do not include appropriate stretching and relaxing tasks.

Creative development

79 Children enter the school with low levels of attainment in this area of learning, and in many cases with limited language skills to help them develop their imaginations. Children’s progress is unsatisfactory and most children are unlikely to achieve the early learning goals in this area by the end of the reception year. Teaching is also unsatisfactory overall in creative development. The curriculum does not give children sufficient opportunity to explore

ideas and develop their own creative thinking. There are limited opportunities to explore colour, texture and shape because the school day is heavily dominated by a formal organisation of sessions. Many children achieve well in 'making and doing' activities, as they are able to listen very well and to follow clear instructions. They have produced some impressive chalk pictures of still-life fruits in the style of Cézanne, with good line and perspective. Their clay bananas and tomatoes make a pleasing display, all of a similar style and size. In musical development too, a body of knowledge is well promoted. Children are able to identify a musical instrument from the sound only, when the teacher plays several different sounds unseen by the class. They can then select the same instruments from a box full of familiar instruments. But they have no opportunity to play themselves, to explore and experiment so that they can begin to express their own ideas. There is a good selection of musical instruments in the school hall, but these are not available to the reception children except during music sessions or hymn practice. Children sing with enthusiasm and learn the words of songs quickly, but few opportunities are taken when they can use this learning outside the set routines of the timetable. Role-play opportunities are also limited, although each classroom has a home-corner and a few dressing up clothes. Structured play with adult support is not timetabled for creative play.

80 The quality of resources is barely adequate for all areas of learning, but particularly so for creative development and outdoor experiences.

ENGLISH

81 Standards are broadly average by the age of seven, but below average at the age of eleven. Although many pupils do reach the expected levels by Year 6 the proportion of the year group doing so is less than that nationally and the number who reach the higher level (level 5) is also lower than found countrywide. These findings accord with the national test results in 2001. The school has significantly improved the number of pupils gaining the expected levels since the last inspection, but because national results have also improved the school remains below average. Nevertheless, compared with similar schools results were above average in writing at the age of seven and overall in English at the age of eleven.

82 Pupils' speaking and listening skills throughout the school are average. Most pupils listen to teachers and support staff and recall facts and follow instructions satisfactorily. They contribute confidently to discussions, although some of them have to be actively encouraged to do so. When teachers provide useful opportunities to formulate replies by discussing with a partner first, most pupils are eager to contribute. In a Year 2 RE lesson pupils offered many ways to show respect after talking to a classmate. They are also ready contributors to most group discussions, as seen in Year 6 when pupils decided which words for 'goodbye' were formal and which could be used with friends and classmates. When they are speaking to the whole class pupils speak audibly in order for everyone to hear, and the oldest pupils are aware of Standard English and the need to match what they say to the audience. Year 3 pupils, for instance, speak in assembly when they talk clearly about their favourite Bible stories. Although higher attaining pupils use their language to think and to explore a range of ideas, many pupils are reluctant to contribute when questions require reasons or explanations and resort to repeating what they have already been told or failing to answer the question posed. They also have problems with nuances and shades of meaning. While the better teaching provides opportunities to develop these aspects, it is not a priority in many of the English lessons and for some pupils with English as an additional language this hinders active participation.

83 By the age of seven most pupils can read simple texts competently. They have a number of strategies to work out unknown words, including using the picture, the general meaning and the sounds of letters in the words. They know how to identify basic information about a text, such as the author, title and illustrator, and have a sound understanding so that they can talk about what they have read. Where the books appeal to pupils they see the humour and fun in the text and respond appropriately. Year 2 pupils studying nonsense poems, for instance, laughed spontaneously before reading one of the poems because the farm animals were making unexpected sounds. Only the most fluent readers are beginning to read with expression, though. Lower attaining pupils, have some knowledge of letter sounds, but often cannot use these sufficiently confidently to build the word. This weakness is often a handicap to them in the juniors because it is never sufficiently well grounded to be used on more difficult words.

84 By the age of eleven reading has become a weakness for many pupils. Although they read harder texts and increase their understanding of different types of literature, including poetry, many fail to improve their understanding of how meaning can be inferred or implied. They are not confident about using the context to work out the meaning of an unfamiliar word. Many also lack the flexibility to scan or skim a text to locate the words and phrases which they need for a particular purpose. Very few pupils can use all the skills needed to locate information confidently. Although many know about alphabetical order, contents, index, glossary and book classification few can actually apply these in order to answer a question or to find more information about a particular subject. Because the school library is inaccessible for most of the day and is poorly stocked and organised, pupils do not have the regular opportunities to apply the skills they are taught in literacy lessons.

85 In writing, there is a similar situation. By the end of the infants most pupils have learnt to write for a range of purposes and to punctuate sentences with full stops and capital letters. The higher attainers are beginning to use other punctuation marks such as question and exclamation marks, but the lower attainers do not use full stops consistently and put capital letters in the middle of words. Most pupils spell common words reasonably accurately, but words like 'said' and 'black' are not always correct. Higher attaining pupils often include more interesting vocabulary in their work. Most pupils know the difference between writing instructions, reports, stories and book evaluations and can structure a story with a beginning, middle and ending.

86 By Year 6 writing is often at greater length and for a wider range of purposes, but accuracy is frequently a weakness. While some pupils have increased the range of punctuation they use, too many pupils are still only secure with full stops and capital letters. Spelling is often incorrect, including regularly used words like 'forward' and 'because'. Grammatical errors such as mixed tenses and subject-verb agreement are also not uncommon. Although pupils are introduced to the use of dictionaries and thesauruses and work sometimes refers to them, they are not regarded by pupils as essential tools. In a Year 6 English lesson, for instance, it is suggested that pupils might find some synonyms for money, but in practice few do so. Most pupils do write for the intended purposes, with awareness of the likely audience and a suitable structure or development of ideas. Higher attainers, as in the infants, use a wider range of vocabulary to express their ideas and sometimes use devices they have learnt about such as single word sentences to create suspense.

87 However, throughout the school handwriting is poor. Infant pupils do not learn to form letters well, and do not understand which pencil strokes ones descend below the line and the relative height of ascending strokes. Very little work by Year 6 pupils is neatly presented with well-formed, consistently joined and fluent style. Too many pupils have inconsistently sized letters and varying slopes, or they cross out untidily.

88 Although progress in lessons throughout the infants and for pupils with special educational needs is generally satisfactory, this is not maintained in the later stages of the juniors, and is often not as rapid as expected for higher attaining pupils. Pupils are introduced to basic skills and relevant understanding of texts prescribed in the National Literacy Strategy and their work is regularly assessed. However, the information provided by the results of tests and assessed pieces of writing is not always consistently gathered, and is seldom used effectively to ensure pupils' work improves. Group and class targets are set, but these are not often specific, and not necessarily appropriate for the individuals concerned. Few teachers use these as a focus for the work in progress, and where they do make reference to a target they do not check on whether pupils are taking account of it in their work. Marking sometimes identifies weaker areas, but does not pursue the issue until it is securely developed. Much of the ongoing marking and comments made by teachers in lessons is over-effusive and does not give pupils a clear idea of how well they are doing. For example, pupils who attempt to use speech marks in Years 3 and 4 seldom consolidate the skills and use them appropriately in Year 6. Work which teachers level against National Curriculum criteria in 'writing assessment books' too often shows slow progress as a result. While group reading books used in literacy lessons are usually suitable for the pupils, what they read for pleasure is frequently undemanding, especially for higher attainers. A Year 2 pupil is currently reading and understanding the C S Lewis *Chronicles of Narnia* at home, and other pupils can talk confidently about the *Harry Potter* books they have read, but are given much simpler material at school. Shortages of modern, challenging fiction make this problem worse. Older pupils are sometimes given independent projects to research but the necessary skills are not developed, and resources are not available. One pupil producing a project on Buddhism, for instance, had to access the Internet at home while another visited the local mobile library and had to remember information to write up later as some reference works were not available for borrowing. Expectations of what pupils can understand and achieve, and the way they present their work are too low.

89 Some of these shortcomings were identified in the last inspection report, but have remained as weaknesses despite the improvement in the percentages of pupils reaching expected National Curriculum levels. This particularly applies to the challenge of reading material, quality of marking and acceptance of poor handwriting. The teaching is more consistent, but still varies across the school, with one unsatisfactory lesson and consistently good teaching in Year 3. Agreed practices, such as notifying a group of pupils in advance that they will be required to present their work during the plenary, are not always used. Homework is set regularly by some teachers but not others, and where it is given it does not always advance pupils' learning.

90 Teaching does take account of the National Literacy Strategy in providing a shared text, a clear objective and an opportunity to discuss the work done in a plenary at the end of the lesson. Pupils are thus taught what they need to know and have the chance to consolidate it in lessons. Opportunities for talking are regularly provided and are actively used to include all pupils' ideas and experiences, including those pupils who are newly arrived in the country. Pupils' home languages are usefully discussed to assist in the wider understanding of language. Teachers explain technical vocabulary regularly so that pupils extend their own knowledge of words. Pupils are regularly given the opportunity to redraft work and improve the content. Most teachers are good at recapping what has been covered and putting it in the context of what pupils have been doing in other lessons so they understand its purpose. However, there are shortcomings in teachers' own subject knowledge. Some teachers speak in non-standard English to the pupils (e.g. 'You was'), others make errors in their own spelling (e.g. the word 'sentence' incorrectly spelt in comment on a pupil's book) and many provide poor examples of writing on the whiteboard. Pupils thus do not have good role models to emulate. Activities and tasks set for pupils are

often unimaginative, and there is a heavy reliance in some classes on worksheets which provide practice in isolated skills out of context. Under these circumstances pupils tend to lose interest and concentration, and this also happens when teachers talk too long when introducing a topic.

91 The co-ordinator has monitored provision and identified some of the areas which need consistency or development, and has put these forward as priorities for action. However, the opportunity to ensure these are dealt with thoroughly has not been provided and progress is slow even where they are relatively straightforward, such as teaching handwriting. Teachers have not benefited from seeing best practice. While some useful writing tasks are incorporated into work in history and religious education this area remains underdeveloped, as does the use of ICT to support English. The last inspection report identified shortcomings in the range and quality of book stocks, and, although a start has been made, the school has not made much progress in remedying this situation. Inspectors agree with some parents' concerns about the availability of reading material.

MATHEMATICS

92 The 2001 National Curriculum test results for Year 2 pupils show that standards are below average in mathematics. Standards are average when compared with similar schools, where pupils are drawn from similar backgrounds. The unvalidated test results for 2002 and the inspection judgements support these findings.

93 The results of National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils in 2001 were well below average, with almost half the year group failing to reach the average national standard. However, inspection judgements and the evidence provided by the school from pupils' assessment shows that standards have improved and that the present Year 6 pupils are reaching standards below the national average. Almost two thirds of pupils are expected to reach at least the expected standards and a good proportion, in the region of a quarter, are expected to attain above the expected standards.

94 Pupils generally make sound progress through the school in mathematics but progress is accelerated towards the end of the juniors because of the good and very good teaching in years 5 and 6. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. They are supported well by learning support assistants and receive a good match of work in their mathematics sets. The well focussed teaching in the lower junior sets by the special needs co-ordinator is also instrumental in maintaining the level of progress of lower attaining pupils. Those pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils because of the good bilingual support given by teachers and learning support assistants. When difficulties arise because of misunderstandings related to language, adults in the classroom are quick to respond and translate instructions into pupils' first language. The setting arrangements also allow gifted and talented pupils to reach their full potential in the subject because the tasks set in lessons are challenging. Additional tuition is given to the highest attaining pupils who are expected to achieve the very high level 6 standard this year.

95 Standards are rising slowly in the infants but quite rapidly towards the end of the junior stage. After two years of falling standards in Year 6 the school has turned the tide and begun to reverse the downward trend quite significantly. The strategies it has put into place are proving very effective. The subject has become a high profile area of development. Expenditure on training and equipment has increased in the last two years in a determined effort to improve pupils' performance.

96 The staff expertise in the analysis of test results has improved and is used sensibly to target weaker areas of pupils' knowledge and enhance curriculum provision. Realistic and achievable targets are set for pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6, which the school is on line to reach. Setting arrangements have enabled high attaining pupils to reach higher levels. The monitoring of teaching and learning has been improved so that teachers are more confident and aware of school expectations. The new co-ordinator for mathematics has also played an important part in raising standards. Her good level of mathematical expertise and commitment to the subject is beginning to make a very positive impact on standards.

97 The test results and inspection findings from 1997 indicate that standards have remained broadly similar in Year 2 but have fallen in recent years in Year 6. Teaching has generally improved. At the last inspection, examples of unsatisfactory and poor teaching were reported. This is no longer the case; all teaching is at least satisfactory and teaching is good or very good in many junior classes. Pupils' work is better matched to pupils' level of ability and apparatus is used more effectively in infant classes. However, teachers' marking still remains inconsistent and even weak in some classes. It does not give pupils enough guidance on how they can improve their work. Overall, the school has made sound progress since the last inspection but it is only in the last year that improvement has become evident with higher standards in the junior classes.

98 The standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 are below average. The vast majority of pupils reach average standards but only a small percentage attain above average standards. The school is addressing this issue, however, and there are indications that more pupils will reach higher standards in the future. The number of pupils below average is greater than usual in Year 2. Most pupils can count in tens competently but find it difficult to continue the pattern when they cross the boundary of 100. They have a good understanding of odd and even numbers and recognise these in patterns. Higher attaining pupils are proficient in making up a combination of coins to total a pound in problem solving exercises. They recognise pattern in simple sequences and predict the next number in a series by adding and subtracting single-digit numbers. Average attaining pupils round numbers up and down to the nearest ten and know number bonds to twenty. Lower attaining pupils are yet to become secure in this concept. They find it difficult to assemble three numbers that make a total of ten. Pupils operating at this lower level are not secure in their knowledge of two-dimensional shapes because they do not know the names of all common shapes. The majority of pupils in Year 2 measure accurately in centimetres.

99 Standards are below average in mathematics in Year 6. Although two thirds of pupils are likely to reach average or above average standards, a comparatively high proportion are working at below average levels. A positive feature is the increase in the percentage of pupils reaching above average standards. These pupils are confident mathematicians. They understand x and y axes and locate co-ordinates within all four quadrants, crossing boundaries of positive and negative numbers. They translate simple shapes from one quadrant to another, although as instructions become more complex they find the tasks more difficult to solve. The most able pupils are working at advanced levels when they find the area of a circle using a set formula. Average attaining pupils are also confident. They have a sound understanding of place value when multiplying by tens, hundreds and thousands. In addition and subtraction work they partition three-digit numbers, breaking them down into hundreds, tens and units before regrouping them to find an accurate answer. In shape, space and measurement, pupils find the volume of cubes and in problem solving calculations the area of more complex two-dimensional shapes.

100 Lower attaining pupils find it more difficult to apply their skills when solving the problem 'what is the total cost of 95 items at £6 each?' They use formal methods of addition,

subtraction and multiplication well to calculate answers, but lack the depth of understanding to apply this knowledge. They recognise multiples of two, three, five and ten when compiling a series of numbers. Pupils understand how to find the area of a simple two-dimensional shape when it is transposed onto squared paper but the squared value is not recorded accurately. Nevertheless, these pupils are making sound progress through the school, just like their classmates when prior attainment is taken into consideration. The best progress is in Years 5 and 6 where teaching and learning tend to be good or very good.

101 The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers use positive management strategies to ensure that pupils listen, concentrate and behave well. When tasks have been set, pupils settle well and work hard. Teachers circulate around the room monitoring behaviour and making informal assessment of pupils' work. They intervene and check that pupils understand what is expected of them. The basic calculation skills are generally taught well through careful explanation, illustrated examples on the class whiteboards and through regular practice. Teachers plan their lessons well. They have clear learning objectives and provide well-matched work for pupils to increase their understanding and develop skills. In the best lessons teachers use novel approaches to stimulate pupils' interest and enhance independent learning. For example in a Year 6 class the teacher paired pupils and seated them back-to-back. She then asked each pupil to select a two dimensional shape and for their partner to ask questions about its properties. From the information they gleaned they were able to name the shape.

102 The pace of lessons is usually good. Teachers let pupils know how long they have left to complete the task, as in the Year 4 lesson when a timer was used. There are good examples of learning resources being used effectively and learning support assistants, especially in infant classes, making a valuable contribution to lessons, by giving direct support to pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Weaknesses in teaching and learning are few but they tend to be related to assessment. The final part of the lesson or plenary, does not always reinforce what has been learnt in a sharp, succinct manner. There are weaknesses in marking because there is not a consistent approach throughout the school. There are good examples of written comments from teachers explaining what pupils must do to improve but equally some work in exercise books is merely a series of 'ticks' with occasional positive comments. There is a small amount of evidence of unmarked work in pupils' exercise books which is likely to discourage pupils from doing their best. Teachers set group targets on a termly basis for pupils to achieve. These are drawn from National Curriculum attainment targets. This is a positive move by the school but targets are too general, too great in number and not reviewed frequently enough. Individual pupils are not clear about the next step they have to take in order to improve their learning.

103 The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy well and pupils are benefiting from the structured teaching. Numeracy skills are improving and the teaching of mental calculation is a good feature in many lessons. The four elements of mathematics are covered properly within the curriculum provision but many pupils, especially lower attainers find it difficult to apply their skills in problem solving activities. Although they have appropriate calculation skills there is a weakness in their depth of understanding. The school covers data-handling thoroughly but the use of ICT in this area is neglected. There is very little evidence of computer generated graphs, charts or the classification of data. The school is at an early stage of planning opportunities for developing numeracy in other curriculum areas. There are some good unstructured examples in science and physical education where pupils measure the results of their activities. Learning resources are generally satisfactory and used well to build pupils' concepts and improve skills. The mobile classrooms are quite small, especially for junior pupils and this limits the space available for mathematical investigation.

SCIENCE

104 The results in the 2001 teacher assessments of seven-year-olds were well below the national average. In comparison with similar schools standards were below average. In the last report standards were recorded as average, but teacher assessments at the time indicated that they were well below the national average. The findings of the current inspection are that the standards being achieved by seven-year-olds are just below average. This constitutes a rise in standards since the last inspection. The main contributory factors are the improvement in the quality of teaching and the measures taken by the school to provide pupils with opportunities to work in smaller groups. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are provided with good support and are achieving well.

105 The national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2001 indicated that standards were well below the national average and below average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level (level 4) was well below the national average but the proportion achieving the higher level (level 5) was rather better, and closer to the national average. In comparison with similar schools standards were slightly below average. An analysis of test result shows that standards have risen for the last four years in line with the national trend. The findings of the current inspection are that the standards being achieved by eleven-year-olds are below average. Although in broad terms this is a similar situation to that recorded at the last inspection, the gap between the standards achieved by the school and those achieved nationally is beginning to close. This improvement is principally as a result of an improvement in the quality of teaching. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are provided with good support and are achieving well. Challenging targets have been set for future improvement.

106 By the age of seven, pupils conduct experiments and record their results in charts and on graphs, for example the properties of materials. In lessons in Year 1 classes, pupils developed skills of observation as they used magnifying glasses to study the structure of flowers. In these classes pupils identify different parts of plants and know what they need to grow healthily. In Year 2, pupils sort and group animals according to different characteristics, recording their information on a Carroll Diagram. Pupils understand that some materials, for example chocolate, change when they are heated. Pupils have some understanding of forces such as pushes and pulls that are in operation to make something move. The pupils know that some appliances need electricity to make them work and construct electric circuits with batteries, wires and bulbs. In spite of the teachers placing a strong emphasis on the development of scientific vocabulary, a minority struggles with even the simplest of words, for example identifying a 'leaf' on a stem.

107 By the age of eleven, pupils prepare and conduct a range of experiments, and make reasoned predictions based on their scientific understanding. They describe well the way in which they conducted the experiments, often recording their observations or measurements in charts. They draw conclusions that are consistent with the evidence they have collected. Previous work indicates that pupils have a satisfactory appreciation of the feeding relationships between plants and animals in a habitat. This was illustrated in a lesson in a Year 6 class, where pupils talked about the ecological balance that prevails in rainforests across the planet. Their understanding of how plants reproduce is less secure. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of electrical circuits and the properties of various materials including those that insulate and those that conduct electricity. They have a satisfactory understanding of the properties of solids and liquids and know how to separate them by sieving, filtering and heating. Their understanding of gases is less secure. Through experimenting with parachutes and hanging weights in water pupils develop a satisfactory

understanding of the forces of gravity and air resistance and balanced and unbalanced forces.

108 The quality of teaching and learning are good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. At the beginning of lessons teachers tell pupils what they are to learn so pupils understand what they are expected to achieve. In the introduction to their lessons teachers make good links with previous learning and ensure that lessons build carefully upon pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. In the best lessons, teachers take a positive encouraging approach, which fosters self-confidence and develops self-esteem. In these lessons, pupils have good relationships with one another and work effectively as members of a team. In a very good lesson in a Year 6 class, for example, pupils worked very well together as they prepared presentations on rain forests. The class teacher set time limits to ensure that a good pace was maintained and that the pupils worked hard. In response the pupils worked with enthusiasm and presented their information in an interesting and stimulating manner using an overhead projector. In many lessons there is a good summary at the end of the lesson to assess pupils' understanding and reinforce the learning. In a very good lesson in a Year 1 class, for example, the teaching effectively reinforced the functions of different parts of a plant, supported very well by the teaching assistant. In each of the lessons observed, the teachers managed the pupils well and the standard of behaviour was good. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

109 Although the teaching observed during the inspection was good, closer examination of pupils' previous work indicates some areas of weaknesses. Although the quality of teachers' marking of pupils' work is satisfactory overall, it is inconsistent. Some teachers mark well, clearly identifying where the pupils have done well and how they need to improve. On some occasions, pupils work is left unmarked, issues raised by teachers are not followed up and in some cases work is left unfinished. Teachers sometimes have insufficiently high expectations of the pupils, particularly in relation to the presentation of their work. This can be significant, particularly when pupils record the results of experiments in an untidy manner.

110 The curriculum is satisfactory and clearly underpins the progressive development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. A particularly good feature of the school's work is the emphasis that is placed on the skills of scientific enquiry. There is good provision for pupils to develop skills of investigation through conducting experiments, obtaining and presenting their findings and drawing conclusions. There is satisfactory provision for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in this subject. Pupils often record the outcomes of their experiments in sentences rather than simply supplying 'one word' answers on worksheets. They frequently use instruments, such as force meters, for measuring and display their findings on charts. There is, however, little evidence of the results of experiments being recorded on graphs or computer databases. Pupils sometimes use the Internet to research topics in this subject, but the use of computers to support pupils' learning is unsatisfactory. There are satisfactory procedures to record and chart the pupils' progress in their learning, to monitor pupils' progress and inform teachers' planning. These are at an early stage of development and their effectiveness is not yet proven.

111 Subject leadership is satisfactory. The subject leader has been influential in developing the curriculum and systems to check how well pupils are progressing. She supports colleagues informally but does not check their planning or assess the quality of their teaching. She has begun to collect in pupils' books to check their progress and the standards they are achieving, but this is also in its earliest stages of development. The school is beginning to track pupils' progress including the setting of targets for improvement but it does not currently fully analyse the outcomes of the tests that pupils undertake. The

school recognises that more work needs to be done in this subject. This is clearly identified in the school development plan as a key focus for improvement.

ART AND DESIGN

112 Attainment is average throughout the school, reflecting the satisfactory quality of teaching. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were unsatisfactory at seven. Pupils throughout the school make sound progress, including pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The co-ordinator has recently introduced a variety of strategies to improve pupils' learning and experiences, with good effect, and is beginning to raise the profile of the subject in the school.

113 Only two lessons were observed during the inspection, both in Year 5. Discussions with pupils and scrutiny of the work displayed around the school indicate that by the time they are eleven pupils are able to use their knowledge of materials and processes to produce some good work. Year 6 pupils designed, made and improved festival masks, using a variety of basic materials decorated with feathers, sequins, paint and fabric, some with stunning effect. They are able to use line and tone in their pictures of life in Benin to convey their own ideas about this different culture. Earlier in the year pupils worked with an architecture student from a local university, studying the work of Gaudi and Charles Rennie Mackintosh. The work displayed reflects pupils' skills and collaborative abilities, and they are able to talk about their learning with confidence and pleasure.

114 Year 5 pupils are less articulate about their experiences. Although they demonstrate a good attitude to their work, they find it difficult to share ideas or to work through the processes of design leading to a finished product. During a lesson about starting points for depicting stories, for instance, one class focused almost exclusively on the resources they would need to produce a representation of 'Psyche and Eros', finding it difficult to begin to sketch out their pictures and ideas. A box of materials proved a distraction to the main focus of the lesson, as pupils found it hard to visualise appropriate usage of the contents, or to think about the blending of colour and effect. The school is making appropriate efforts to overcome pupils' lack of experience by providing a weekly art club, currently for pupils in Year 1 and Year 5 pupils. There the older pupils have painted pictures in the style of Mondrian which are displayed in the school's 'gallery', alongside work by younger pupils, giving value to the subject and effectively enhancing pupils' self-esteem.

115 Drawing skills are satisfactorily developed across the school and pupils have opportunities to paint. The curriculum has been generally impoverished until recently, however, when the emphasis on cross-curricular artwork has given pupils some new direction. Year 6, for example, drew carefully labelled sketches to illustrate their work on *Oliver Twist* and Year 1 made a collage of the Three Little Pigs as part of their science work on materials and their uses. But the range of experiences for younger pupils is still too narrow. Most displays in the infant classes are of flat painting, chalk pictures or tissue paper collage. There is very little evidence of work in, for example, clay, printing or weaving. Pupils talk with pleasure about mixing colours and the care they take when painting. Pupils throughout the school are able to follow instructions well, and to reproduce pictures such as a still life in the style of Cézanne. All pupils complete the same tasks, with little allowance made for differing developmental needs. Opportunities for pupils to be creative are rare as lessons are generally formal, and there is no regular use of sketchbooks for pupils to record their own impressions and observations.

116 Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has reviewed the current schemes of work to ensure that learning incorporates a celebration of the pupils'

rich cultural heritage. She has begun to monitor work samples to track this, and to develop a portfolio to illustrate standards. Art is included in planning documents, and the school uses nationally produced schemes of work. Assessment is currently inconsistent, although there are newly devised record sheets which include the key skills for each unit, and these are likely to contribute significantly to a coherent record of pupils' learning.

117 Many displays around the school are well mounted, and reflect and inform pupils' learning. However, some classrooms and areas are untidy and scruffy. They do not provide a stimulating learning environment, detracting from the good work on display. Resources are stored centrally and are easily accessible. They are of satisfactory quality, although use of ICT is very limited.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

118 Standards attained by seven- and eleven-year-olds are average. Pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The standards attained by seven-year-olds are higher than those recorded at the time of the last inspection. In addition, there have been improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils' attitudes to their learning and the range of opportunities provided. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress.

119 By the age of seven, pupils undertake a good range of activities to promote their design and making skills. Pupils in Year 2 develop their designing skills as they plan the making of a finger puppet or a wheeled vehicle. They label their designs indicating the features of the product and the materials to be used. When designing pupils consider what methods to use to join materials together. When the products are complete pupils evaluate whether they like what they have achieved and how they might improve them. Pupils work with a range of recycled materials, card and textiles developing their skills of cutting, sticking and joining. In Year 1 for example, pupils created moving pictures using strips of card for sliders and levers, and they made cat calendars, using split pins to allow for movement of the limbs. In Year 2, pupils made finger puppets, sewing, gluing and stapling pieces together and then adding features such as whiskers and ears. In the same year, pupils made wheeled vehicles from card and recycled materials, gluing the parts together and finally painting the finished product. Pupils use appropriate technical vocabulary, for example, 'chassis' and 'axle' as they label their wheeled vehicle designs.

120 By the age of eleven, pupils undertake a good range of activities to promote their design and making skills. They carefully examine everyday objects, for example, purses and slippers to see how they are constructed and how they work. Based on their observations they generate ideas and plans about how they are to make their own. For example pupils in Year 4 designed plans about how to make a money container after they studied the fastenings and mechanisms of different purses and wallets. Year 6 pupils carefully examined an Indian slipper, considering its fitness for purpose and who the slipper might be for. Examination of previous work shows that after examining the slippers, pupils drew a view from different viewpoints, carefully labelling what materials they intended to use. Students from the Birmingham School of Architecture led pupils in a Year 6 class to evaluate the structure of buildings, for example St Paul's Cathedral, considering its shape, scale and proportion. Following discussions about designing their own personal space pupils made sketches, paintings and labelled drawings. They considered the design of their structure, including how they would hold up the roof and the materials they would use, like bubble-wrap to keep in the heat. The finished products were made of clay, many with domed-shaped roofs supported by wire mesh or lollipop sticks.

121 No teaching in Year 1 or 2 was observed during the inspection. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 was uniformly good. Teachers plan and prepare the lessons well ensuring that resources are well organised. During the introduction, teachers make good reference to pupils' previous learning and question effectively to assess their knowledge and challenge their understanding. In a lesson in a Year 6 class, for example, the teacher carefully questioned the pupils about the similarities and differences of the slippers on display and their suitability for different purposes. As a result pupils began to link the idea of the structure of the slippers and where they would be used, recognising that 'mojaha's' are worn in hot countries. Teachers value the contributions that pupils make, fostering their self-confidence and self-esteem. In response, pupils settle to their tasks quickly and work well. In a good lesson in a Year 4 class, for example, pupils were engrossed in drawing pictures and sticking them onto paper to make them 'pop up', or open in the same way as they had seen in books they had looked at. Pupils were very proud of the work they had produced and enjoyed sharing it with the rest of the class at the end of the lesson. In one lesson, however, pupils who found the task challenging required a lot of encouragement to complete it. In this and the other lessons observed, pupils were well managed and as a result the standard of behaviour was good.

122 There is now good guidance for the teaching of this subject. Pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding, including food technology. A particularly good feature of the planning is the way in which teachers link learning in different subjects, in particular design and technology and science. In Year 4, for example, pupils made rooms with alarm systems, using their knowledge of electrical circuits. In Year 5, pupils made good quality stringed and percussion musical instruments from card and recycled materials. The pupils considered how they could alter the pitch of their instruments by using different thickness of rubber bands or by stretching them. Good account is taken of the cultural and ethnic diversity of pupils as they are provided with different hats, shoes and slippers to examine before generating their designs. A very good range of visits is organised for pupils in all years to broaden their understanding of how technology is used in the adult world. These visits are followed up well in class and form the basis of much of the work that the pupils do. There is little evidence of the effective use of ICT in DT lessons. Pupils' achievements are now being recorded, but this is a new initiative and its effectiveness in raising standards is not yet proven. The co-ordinator has worked effectively to raise the profile of the subject in developing the curriculum, supporting colleagues and improving the quality and range of resources. She has a clear view of how to develop the subject further but does not monitor teaching or planning and has had limited opportunities to check the standards that pupils achieve.

GEOGRAPHY

123 Standards are below average throughout the school. The amount of time allocated to geography is less than that in most schools.

124 Teaching and learning about places and features is satisfactory throughout the school. Infant pupils learn about life in Jamaica through listening to teachers describe a bear's travels, looking at photographs and using simple reference books. Pupils who have family contact with Jamaica contribute their own knowledge and experience. They record simple facts as a holiday postcard to a friend. Pupils are shown where Jamaica is on a globe and on a map of the Caribbean. When asked how long it might take to travel from Great Britain pupils make wild guesses because they do not understand the relationships of the two countries on the globe or the relevant distances.

125 Year 4 pupils learn about life in an Indian village and compare it with their own lives. In Year 5 pupils compare and contrast their own locality with that of a rural village which they

later visit. They use Ordnance Survey map extracts to compare land use and make sensible deductions from their observations. Year 6 pupils learn about the River Severn from its source to the estuary, how it has affected the landscape and the different settlements along its banks by watching appropriate videos and discussing them. They have a secure knowledge of geographical terms relating to a river's course.

126 Teaching in the lessons observed is satisfactory overall. In the better lessons teachers plan activities well, pace is good, pupils pay good attention and concentrate well, improving their knowledge and understanding of places as in the Year 5 lesson above. Teaching is unsatisfactory when the teacher is unclear how the learning fits into the overall scheme, pace is slow and activities are not rigorous enough. Consequently pupils do not apply themselves properly, behaviour deteriorates and progress is unsatisfactory.

127 Development of mapping skills is unsatisfactory throughout the school. Year 1 pupils contribute pictures to a large wall map of the streets around school by adding drawings of local buildings and homes. There is no evidence of teaching simple differences between plans and elevations. As a result Year 3 pupils confuse plan and elevation when they construct a diagrammatic map of the school environment. The inspector worked with a group of Year 6 pupils. Using a world map they could name most continents and locate the main countries. None could name or locate any mountain range and only one pupil named and located a major river – the Nile. They could not name or locate the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. They have little understanding of climatic regions or the distinctive features of each.

128 In an activity with simplified Ordnance Survey maps pupils could not describe the landscape using the features depicted. When contour lines were explained more able pupils started to make sensible deductions. They became quite animated as they explored the maps further to decide the preferable location for a dam for a new reservoir and suggest which site would be preferable, but they could not describe or explain the effect each would have beyond the number of houses that would be drowned.

129 The scheme of work is unsatisfactory because it only identifies the countries and themes to be taught each year. There is no systematic skills development especially for mapwork. The scheme does not plan effectively to build upon what pupils have already learned as they progress through the school. Although a system for recording attainment is in place it is unsatisfactory because it lacks precision. There is no system for recording skills.

130 There is no designated co-ordinator in post at present. There has been no systematic monitoring of teaching or evaluation of pupils' attainment. Insufficient thought has been given to creating proper links with other subjects, by using geography texts or geography topics for writing tasks, and by using measuring, scale and co-ordinates to supplement the limited time allocated to geography. There are some sound links with history. There is little evidence of ICT being used in geography lessons. Much of pupils' written work is poorly presented and yet is often highly praised by teachers. Evidence from the discussion with Year 6 pupils indicates that more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. There has been little improvement since the previous inspection.

HISTORY

131 Standards in history are satisfactory by Year 6, but barely satisfactory at Year 2. Pupils make appropriate progress through Years 1 and 2 in knowledge and understanding about different periods of history and knowledge of famous people.

132 Very little teaching could be observed during the inspection as most classes were being taught geography at the time. From a scrutiny of pupils' work and evidence around school presentation of work is often unsatisfactory yet highly praised by teachers when it is marked. Handwriting is untidy and wrong spellings uncorrected. Timelines displayed in classrooms cover too much time for younger pupils, others are not to scale and do not help pupils understand the relationship between different periods and events. This is not good enough.

133 The infants' curriculum is unbalanced. Too little time is allocated to history. Too much time is spent learning about one famous person, for example several lessons for Mary Seacole, when it would be more appropriate to select a different person for each lesson. Pupils know about some famous people and some significant events in the past, such as the Great Fire of London. They know that life was different in the past. They visit local places of historical interest. Work in pupils' books is very sketchy and poorly presented.

134 The planned curriculum for juniors is satisfactory. Topics chosen are appropriate. The local area provides a rich source of historical change over a long period of time and includes several famous people who have contributed to industrial development in the area. This is used well in Year 4 to learn about change in a familiar context using first hand experience. There are good links with geography by mapping the local area. Links with English are also good. History is used well as a theme for writing tasks. Year 3 pupils produce good pieces of empathetic writing when imagining how they would have felt if evacuated during the Second World War. After studying the past society of Benin, Year 6 pupils create an interesting and informative guidebook summarising their learning well. Research and reference skills are practised well when using books and other sources for information although the use of ICT as a resource is underdeveloped.

135 In order to raise standards further pupils should be expected to present their work more carefully and neatly. More able pupils should be challenged more by expecting them to analyse reasons for, and results of changes in society and by describing the links between events, situations and changes rather than just learning the main facts of periods and societies.

136 The co-ordinator has a good understanding of what is needed, but has had little opportunity to monitor teaching or analyse standards. She has initiated the use of history reference texts for study in English lessons. Further links which are clearly defined in the planning will help to compensate for the limited time available for history. The assessment procedure is limited as it does not include skills development nor are the assessed learning objectives linked to National Curriculum levels of attainment. These levels should also be included in the topic planning to ensure that all pupils are appropriately challenged.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

137 Standards in ICT are below average throughout the school and pupils make unsatisfactory progress. This is the same as at the time of the last report and improvement since then has been unsatisfactory. Where some pupils do show average standards in aspects of ICT, the fact that they have computers at home and can learn and practise skills with their parents is a contributory factor.

138 Pupils in Year 6 word process their work, know how to import tables and graphics and can scan in pictures. Beyond this, their skills are relatively limited and there is little evidence of the use of ICT to record work in other subjects. They know some of the basic commands needed to draw shapes on the computer screen but do not always remember to give the commands in the correct order to achieve success. For example they sometimes

forget to include the 'pendown' and 'penup' commands needed to ensure that what they intended to draw actually appears. In discussion they demonstrate that they know how to use email. They also use simple spreadsheets and know how to download information through the Internet and from disk. Year 5 pupils use spreadsheets to produce graphs and charts, do word processing tasks, including importing graphics into their work, and produce simple pictures on the computer. Year 4 pupils word process their work and change the font and type size. Year 3 pupils produce graphs, although they are not properly labelled so it is difficult to know what they are about. Year 2 pupils learn their way around the keyboard and the functions of some of the keys. Year 1 pupils also do word processing but some need help to identify the correct letter keys. Overall pupils, including those with special needs and those with English as an additional language, make unsatisfactory progress in ICT because some teachers lack the expertise and support to teach ICT confidently.

139 Teaching overall is unsatisfactory although some good teaching was also seen. Very little teaching of ICT was seen beyond the lessons timetabled in the computer suite. It was rarely used in classroom lessons to support other subjects. Consequently pupils are learning a technique one week but are given little opportunity to practise until the following week. While the higher attaining pupils and those with computers at home might cope with this, the less able and those without home computers do not get enough time to practise what they are taught. The best lessons are based on a clear understanding of what the pupils need to know to make progress in their understanding of ICT. For example, in a Year 1 lesson the pupils learned how to use the mouse to click on objects on the screen and drag them into a new position. The teacher was confident enough with her own knowledge of computers at this level to be able to correct mistakes made by some pupils, as when one thought the cursor on screen was the mouse. The good use of technical language also helps the pupils to learn. In a Year 4 lesson good planning, left by the class teacher, enabled another teacher to teach the class some simple elements of database work. However, not enough teaching shows this level of expertise and confidence. As some teachers lack confidence in the subject they rely heavily upon the scheme of work, but some misinterpret this guidance. For example in a Year 2 lesson the pupils were supposed to learn to use the backspace key to delete text and the teacher assured them that next year they would learn to use the delete key. As most pupils had used the backspace key to correct typing errors in logging on to the computer, they had achieved what the teacher intended almost before the lesson began and spent the rest of the time simply typing in text and deleting it. In a Year 5 lesson, the pupils were supposed to learn to use spreadsheets but some spent far too long simply typing the coordinates of each box on the screen which they had already done on paper before entering the computer suite. Given that the analysis of pupils' work showed Year 3 pupils producing graphs by using spreadsheets it is hard to see how the school can be ensuring that they build upon what they have learned earlier when Year 5 pupils were not doing this in their lesson. Consequently pupils are not learning anything like fast enough to reach an acceptable standard by the time they are eleven. The school misses too many opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills through ICT. The work in the computer suite does give pupils the chance to work in pairs and discuss their work. They enjoy this and get on very well together, taking turns and in some cases helping less confident pupils to understand what they are doing. The way they work together is a good example of the school's focus on mutual respect regardless of gender or cultural background being demonstrated in practice.

140 The previous report included a key issue about raising standards in ICT and the school has done too little since then. Leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory. Although an audit of teachers' ICT skills was carried out around two years ago little was done to identify ways of improving their expertise. The school now has training planned under the national scheme to improve ICT teaching but has done far too little in the intervening years. The school has provided much better resources since the last inspection, mainly through the

recent computer suite. However, learning that takes place there needs to be consolidated through the regular use of computers in other lessons back in the classroom and there was little evidence of this happening during the inspection. The school does not have rigorous enough systems for assessing and recording how well pupils are learning in ICT in order to help teachers to plan for what they need next. Leadership of the subject does not include a strong enough role in monitoring teaching and learning to identify precisely how good standards are and how effective or ineffective teaching and learning are. This needs to be a priority so that the school can become aware of where the best and weakest teaching in ICT is and take steps to address the current problems. Leadership should also include much clearer support and guidance for all teachers so that they can teach with confidence. Some are unaware of the scheme of work beyond that for their own year group for example. Consequently they do not really know much about what the pupils should have learned already and will learn in succeeding years.

MUSIC

141 Standards of attainment have declined since the last inspection and are now below average throughout the school. Most pupils make unsatisfactory progress. Music has a low profile as an area of learning, although pupils are given some interesting and stimulating experiences such as visiting musicians and choir performances for special occasions. Insufficient time is allocated to the subject, and the management of that time is unsatisfactory, particularly for pupils in Years 1, 2 and 6. Music time is blocked into a day and a half for Year 2 pupils during the summer term, and similar arrangements are made for Year 6. Lessons sometimes start late because pupils are moving back to their own classroom from numeracy or writing sets, further eroding the time allocation.

142 Only three lessons were observed during the inspection, all in junior classes, and these were satisfactory. The school uses a nationally produced scheme of work, but there is no monitoring of the planning or teaching of this because the school does not have a co-ordinator. In consequence, all three lessons observed focussed on listening and appraising skills through the creation of mood and images. Pupils in Year 4 were able to represent the sound of the sea by their choice of different percussion instruments, and explored ways of visualising images through looking at Turner's 'Fighting Temeraire'. They were enthusiastic about this activity, but became rather over-excited when choosing their instruments. Pupils have very little opportunity to learn to play instruments themselves, and teachers lack confidence in managing lessons that involve performing skills other than singing. Year 6, for example, listened to a tape of 'Night of a Thousand Lights' to help them identify how a mood is created, but the tasks concentrated heavily on the effect of the words. This evoked some good musical terminology as pupils talked about the contrast of tone and different sound combinations at first, but there were many missed opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge to deepen understanding about the impact of the music. Year 5 pupils tried hard to interpret 'Imagine' by John Lennon in words or pictures, but lacked the background experience to understand the activity. However, they were able to explain the meaning of 'tempo', 'timbre' and 'dynamics'. Pupils in Year 2 clap rhythms well, and are very enthusiastic about singing. They know that music and dancing go together and explain how to play a triangle. Overall, however, their recollection of the recent 'music day' was very hazy. When singing with the rest of the infant pupils in hymn practice, they find it difficult to keep time, although the quality of their singing improves during the session. There is not enough guidance given during these practices on how to improve the tone and volume of the singing. The teachers inappropriately praise very ordinary performances. The use of an overhead projector to help pupils remember the words has little impact, as the projection is poor and the words are barely legible.

143 The school provides some good musical experiences for pupils through visiting specialists. Year 2 and Year 5, for example, have workshops with a cellist, and as a result Year 5 produced some fine models of instruments as part of their design technology project. They made booklets about their favourite instrument, researching through the Internet to discover information such as famous cellists and composers. Year 4 and 5 have played steel pans in an after-school club and some pupils in Year 4 have also worked with the Malachi Trust to provide a highly-regarded choir. Some Year 2 pupils have regular violin lessons. There is little evidence that ICT is used effectively in music lessons. Resources for music are satisfactory, easily accessible for lessons and assemblies. However, they are not used very often in assemblies as the hall is too crowded for ease of use.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

144 Pupils achieve average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. They make sound progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make the same progress as their classmates because they are supported well by teachers and learning support assistants.

145 The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Standards were judged to be below average by Year 6 and progress unsatisfactory. Curriculum guidance and better quality teaching appears to have helped to address these weaknesses. However, progress was judged to be good in the infant department at the last inspection and is now satisfactory, which indicates a slight decline.

146 In gymnastic lessons, Year 2 pupils use space sensibly and hold a variety of controlled balances well in warm-up activities. They show sound levels of co-ordination when moving along the benches in different styles and make tidy landings as they jump from apparatus on to the mats. Pupils have a good understanding of safety and behave maturely when setting up the equipment. However, they do not have sufficient opportunities to discuss their movements with others and to analyse their own performance in order to make refinements. Relationships between pupils are generally good but there is little paired work or opportunity to be imaginative in their activities.

147 Year 6 pupils have a clear understanding of why warm-up activities are necessary. They know that muscles need to be toned up before major physical activity. They know that performance in athletics can be improved by refining their techniques in throwing and jumping. They give sensible advice to their classmates after watching them perform and measuring the length of their throws and jumps. In swimming, two thirds of pupils in the Year 6 classes are competent swimmers and can to swim the recommended national minimum distance of 25 metres. The remaining third of pupils are still at an early stage, requiring swimming aids to stay afloat and give them confidence in the water.

148 It is not possible to make an overall judgement of the quality of teaching in physical education because only three lessons were observed during the inspection period. From this small sample, teaching and learning appears to be generally sound. Teachers manage their classes well and ensure that pupils listen, concentrate and follow instructions. In games and athletics lessons the basic skills are taught well. Teachers explanations are clear and they show pupils how the best techniques can improve their skills. Lessons are planned thoroughly with clear learning objectives and activities which will enhance pupils' learning. In general, teachers concentrate too much on improving skills by repeated practice and do not give enough time in lessons to discussion amongst pupils about how they can improve the quality of their performance or by using capable or imaginative pupils to demonstrate as good models for others to emulate. Pupils enjoy physical education lessons. They

participate enthusiastically and when given the opportunity they work well in pairs and groups.

149 The school curriculum provides a good range of interesting activities. In Year 1, pupils participate in the local celebrations for Vasakhi by performing traditional Sikh dances at Handsworth Park. In Year 4, pupils visit Woodlands Outdoor adventure residential centre and older pupils climb the 'Rock Wall' feature as part of an outdoor and adventurous activity programme. Teachers are given good guidance in the school scheme of work, ensuring that progression is maintained throughout the school. The balance of activities is also good but some games lessons do not take place when poor outdoor weather conditions prevail. The timetabling arrangements do not allow for these lessons to be transferred to the school hall. The school ensures that pupils are properly dressed for physical activity and that all are given equal opportunities to participate in activities. There is an adequate range of after-school activities which enhances pupils' games and athletic skills and knowledge.

150 Two knowledgeable part-time teachers manage the subject satisfactorily, but they have no structured opportunities to evaluate teaching and learning. This makes it difficult to develop the subject further without knowing the standards already being achieved in school. However, assessment systems and award systems do provide some information on the attainment of individual pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

151 Attainment in religious education is average by the end of Years 2 and 6. The school has maintained these standards since the last inspection. Pupils' knowledge of the major world faiths is sound and often better. Year 1 and 2 pupils know a variety of stories from different faiths such as that of *Rama and Sita*, *Krishna and Sudhama* and *Jonah and the Whale*. They know of the different places of worship, including first-hand experience of St James Church. They consider the morals of various stories, such as *The Hare and the Tortoise* and relate these to their own lives. They also discuss values such as honesty and kindness and their effects on other people. As a result, one pupil observes, "You do not have to have money to be happy". Year 3 extend their knowledge of stories and places of worship and begin to study the symbols of different religions. They also learn about the importance of prayer and the role of the priest and other religious leaders. Year 4 study different celebrations including Holi and Christian Holy Week. Year 5 pupils consider service in relation to Jesus' teaching using the story of washing the disciples' feet at the Last Supper. Year 6 pupils have extended their knowledge of a particular faith by completing an independent project. They have good factual knowledge of the Muslim faith and consider what God means to them personally. All pupils make steady progress.

152 Religious education is soundly taught, and there is some good practice. The school's valuing of pupils' own religious experiences, which was identified as a positive feature at the time of the last inspection, remains a strength. Teachers' knowledge of the different faiths of class members enables them to draw contributions from pupils to enhance learning. Discussions between pairs of pupils during a Year 6 religious education lesson on pupils' own feelings about what God means to them were thoughtful and sensitive and resulted in perceptive poems. The teachers' constructive relationships with the pupils also enable pupils to feel confident about sharing their personal responses. In Year 4, for instance, when one pupil talks about finding a Buddhist peace prayer on the Internet, this is valued and encourages other pupils to offer their own reflections; in the same lesson pupils talk about their love for family members unselfconsciously. Useful resources are provided to help pupils to understand – in Year 5 the story of washing the disciples' feet was read from different sources, and Year 6 had a sheet of Muslim names for Allah to help them consider how they feel about God. However, the pace of some lessons is slow with too much talking

by the teacher resulting in loss of concentration. Activities are sometimes limited and do not interest pupils. Although at best writing tasks support literacy skills as well as being useful to pupils' understanding of religious beliefs, some are clearly not and because pupils resent carrying them out they do not exert much effort. Writing tasks, too, are not always matched to differing needs. There is little evidence of ICT being used in RE lessons.

153 As at the time of the last inspection, the religious education provision contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Opportunities to reflect on self, the importance of different beliefs and discussion of moral issues contribute very effectively to pupils' personal development.

154 The co-ordinator has worked conscientiously with colleagues to develop the current scheme of work, to provide appropriate resources for teaching and to instil respect for the diverse faiths represented in the school community. Although a modest start has been made in sampling pupils' work, she does not as yet have a clear enough overview of standards, teaching and learning throughout the school.