

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BILSTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bilston, Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 130305

Headteacher: Mr A. Hughes

Reporting inspector: Mr G. Nunn  
1185

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> June 2001

Inspection number: 196376

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: 5 to 11  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Albany Crescent  
Bilston  
Wolverhampton  
West Midlands

Postcode: WV14 0HU

Telephone number: 01902 558690

Fax number: 01902 558692

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Councillor A. Johnson

Date of previous inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1185	G. Nunn	Registered inspector	Mathematics Geography History Provision for pupils with English as an additional language Equality of opportunity	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9510	C. Murray-Watson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1189	S. Brown	Team inspector	English Art and design Music Physical education Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27541	J. Collins	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Information and communication technology Religious education Provision for pupils with special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

Power House Inspections

'Grasshoppers'  
1 Anglesey Close  
Chasetown  
Burntwood  
Staffordshire  
WS7 8XA

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This smaller than average size primary school is situated in a residential area of Bilston in the West Midlands. The school currently has 137 pupils on roll aged between four and eleven years organised into six classes. At the time of the inspection 17 pupils were in the Foundation Stage (Year R). The roll has fallen slightly since the last inspection. The school attracts pupils from the local council estates and some new owner occupied houses outside the local community. The social composition of the school is mixed but with quite a high proportion of pupils coming from a low socio-economic background. There is high unemployment in the area. School assessments indicate that, although the range of abilities is wide on entry, attainment overall is below average when compared with children of a similar age nationally. Twenty per cent of pupils have an ethnic minority background. Forty-three per cent of pupils are entitled to a free school meal. In addition 34 per cent of pupils have special educational needs. These figures are above the national averages for primary schools. No pupils have statements of special educational needs which is below national figures. A high proportion of pupils begin or leave the school at ages other than four or eleven. In fact a quarter of pupils currently at the school did not start at the age of four but arrived at some later point in time. The attainment on entry of many of these pupils is below average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Bilston C E Primary School provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. It has made very good progress since it was last inspected notably in raising the standards pupils attain in many subjects and in improving the quality of teaching. The very good progress that has been made, particularly in the last two years, is largely the result of the commitment by the present headteacher, governors and staff to ensure that pupils' standards are raised. The quality of teaching continues to improve. There are appropriate systems in place to support the care and welfare of pupils. Good provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs. Good provision is also made for pupils' personal development and the school encourages positive attitudes amongst its pupils so that they are keen to learn. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils make good progress in mathematics, science, physical education and art and design right across the school.
- The headteacher provides good leadership for the school.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- Good provision is made for pupils' personal development.
- It promotes positive attitudes amongst the pupils so that they are keen to learn and work hard.
- Pupils are well cared for.

#### **What could be improved**

- The standards pupils attain in English, particularly writing, by the end of both key stages.
- The assessment and recording of pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics,

science and information and communication technology (ICT).

- The roles and responsibilities of senior managers and curriculum co-ordinators, which are in need of review.
- The balance of the curriculum in order to ensure that all subjects are taught for a sufficient amount of time.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in July 1997 the school has made very good progress in addressing the weaknesses identified at that time. Firstly standards of attainment have been raised considerably in many subjects in both key stages as a result of an improvement in the overall quality of teaching. All statutory requirements are now being met. The planning of the curriculum is now good, although some work still remains to be done with regard to the role of curriculum co-ordinators and other senior managers in monitoring and assessing the work of the school and pupils. The school development plan is now good and focussed on raising standards. It also includes success criteria against which to monitor and evaluate progress, as well as possible budgetary implications. Whilst some progress has been made in involving parents in their children's learning, more remains to be done. The school has worked hard on its strategies to improve attendance. It has had some success in this area and attendance levels have risen significantly in the last two years. Finally, all issues related to the most recent auditor's report have been addressed.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	E	E	C	A	well above average    A above average        B average                    C below average          D well below average     E
mathematics	E*	E	C	A	
science	D	C	B	A	

The table shows that when compared with all schools, pupils' standards at the age of 11 are above average in science and similar to national averages in English and mathematics. When compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, results in all three subjects are well above average.

By the age of seven, national tests show that pupils' standards in this school are well below the national average in reading and below average in writing. They are similar to the national average in mathematics and science. When compared with results of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, results in this school are below average in reading and writing, but well above average in mathematics.

Inspection findings show that children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress during their time in the Reception class in all the areas that they study except for their personal, social and emotional development in which they make good progress and attain the early learning goals. In the other areas of learning most children have not attained the nationally expected level when they start work in Year 1. This is largely due to children's low levels of attainment on entry to the school.

In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in mathematics, science, physical education, design and technology, art and design and music and, as a result, a high proportion attain the nationally expected levels for seven-year-olds. Whilst pupils do not attain nationally expected levels for seven-year-olds in English, history, geography, or ICT they, nevertheless, make at least satisfactory progress in these subjects. Pupils' standards in religious education are similar to those expected by the locally agreed syllabus and they make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. The good and satisfactory progress pupils make in Key Stage 1 is largely the result of the high proportion of good and, on occasions, very good teaching they receive.

Inspection findings also show that pupils' levels of attainment in the current Year 6 are below nationally expected levels in all subjects except science, physical education, art and design, design and technology and music. Pupils' standards in religious education are similar to those expected by the locally agreed syllabus for the subject. The below average levels being attained in other subjects is largely due to the fact that half of the pupils in Year 6 have special educational needs. In addition, a high proportion of these pupils have transferred from other schools at various times and, as a result, have had the continuity of their learning interrupted. Although below average standards are being attained by pupils in the present Year 6, they, together with most pupils in Key Stage 2, make good progress given their prior attainment levels in mathematics, science, physical education, art and design and ICT. They make satisfactory progress in English, history, geography, music, design and technology and religious education. Although pupils maintain satisfactory progress in English, their attainment in reading and writing is not yet sufficiently high to reach nationally expected standards. Pupils who have English as an additional language or special educational needs make similar progress, in individual subjects, to other pupils. No significant difference is evident in the amount of progress made by boys and girls.

## **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Pupils work hard in school and generally concentrate well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good across the school. However, there are a few individuals who find it hard to meet the expected high standards.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils grow in confidence as they move through the school. Relationships are generally good.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are below those found in primary schools nationally, although the levels have risen over the last two years. The

	low attendance levels of some pupils are still a cause for concern.
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## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

*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.*

In all lessons, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. In 47 per cent of these lessons it is good, being very good in a further 10 per cent. There is an even distribution of good and very good teaching across both key stages. Mathematics and science are particularly well taught as are the skills of numeracy. The teaching of English, including literacy, is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good it has a direct impact on the good progress pupils make. Teachers' planning for lessons is good and in successful lessons, pupils are challenged by the work set, behave well and work at a brisk pace. Where lessons are not as successful, though not unsatisfactory, teachers' expectations of what pupils are required to complete are not as high and the work is not so well matched to pupils' prior attainment levels. As a result, one or two pupils can become disruptive. The needs of most pupils however, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are well catered for.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad but the balance of the curriculum is unsatisfactory because insufficient time is allocated to the teaching of some subjects. All statutory requirements related to the curriculum are being met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, largely as a result of the effective support of teachers and learning support assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision is made for all groups of pupils who have English as an additional language. Such pupils are well integrated into the life and work of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for all aspects of pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Parents receive satisfactory information about their child's progress and have regular opportunities to visit the school if they have concerns or worries.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The recently appointed headteacher provides good leadership for the school. He is well supported by his staff. A review of subject leaders' and senior managers' responsibilities is necessary to improve the curriculum further as well as monitor more closely the work of the school. The school is well led and managed and the principles of best value are appropriately applied.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors work closely with the headteacher and have an appropriate committee structure in place to support the development of the school. They fulfil their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has begun to put in place good systems to evaluate its performance and as is committed to use these to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good and money is well targeted to achieve the educational aims of the school. The school makes good use of its staff, accommodation and available learning resources and this is having a positive impact on the raising of standards. Very good use is made of displays of pupils' work which greatly enhance the quality of the areas in which pupils work. Large outdoor play equipment is needed for the youngest children.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The progress their children make.</li> <li>• The way the school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• The way the school works closely with them</li> <li>• Good quality teaching.</li> <li>• How well they are kept informed about their child's progress</li> <li>• The school is helping their child to become mature and responsible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The behaviour of its pupils</li> <li>• The leadership and management of the school</li> <li>• The range of extra-curricular activities provided</li> </ul>

The above views are taken from the parent's meeting, attended by 8 parents and 37 responses to the parents' questionnaire. The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. The school expects high standards and many pupils make at least satisfactory and often good progress. The school works well with parents and provides a satisfactory level of information about their child's progress. Inspectors consider that, with the exception of a few individuals, pupils' behaviour is generally good, as also is the quality of leadership being shown by the new headteacher. Inspectors also find that the range of activities provided outside lessons is satisfactory

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. The 2000 National Curriculum test results for 11-year-olds show that the proportion who attain national standards (Level 4) in English and mathematics is similar to the proportion that do so nationally. In science, the proportion of pupils' attaining national standards is above the national proportions. In addition, the proportion who attain the higher Level 5 is also above the national proportion in science and similar to that proportion in English and mathematics. When the school's results are compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, they are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Trends over the last few years show that pupils' overall standards have risen considerably in all three subjects, particularly since the time of the previous inspection four years ago. Inspection findings show that the standards of the current Year 6 are similar to national standards in science but below national standards in English and mathematics. This apparent fall in standards from last year is largely the result of approximately half of the pupils in the current Year 6 having special educational needs. A study of the results of this cohort during the last four years based on Key Stage 1 National Curriculum test results in 1997 and interim test results since, shows that the progress that many pupils have made in their learning has been good, given their prior attainment levels. In addition nearly a quarter of pupils did not start at the school, at the age of four, but started at a later date. The school has done well to assist the progress of these pupils and those with special educational needs, as well as raise its overall standards. This has been largely due to the successful introduction of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies, significant improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection and a highly structured approach to the teaching of all three subjects. However, within this overall pattern there is a concern, in that pupils' overall standards in the writing element of English have not risen as significantly as in other areas. As a result, pupils' standards in writing across Key Stage 2 are still too low. The school is aware of this and has good plans in hand to address this issue.

2. The National Curriculum test results for seven-year-olds in 2000 show that the proportion of pupils attaining national standards (Level 2) is below the national proportion in writing and well below the proportion in reading. Similarly the proportion attaining the higher Level 3 is also well below the proportion that do so nationally in reading but similar to national proportions in writing. In mathematics, a similar proportion attain national standards as do so elsewhere in the country but as with reading the proportion attaining the higher Level 3 is below the national proportion. Teacher assessments in science show a similar picture to the test results in mathematics. When this school's results are compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds they are above average in reading, above average in writing and well above in mathematics. Over the last four years since the previous

inspection, standards have fallen in reading, have risen slightly in writing and have risen significantly in mathematics.

3. Inspection findings show that, the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, together with a significant proportion of good teaching, additional funding for resources and in-service training for teachers, has had a positive impact on pupils' standards. Consequently, whilst the proportion of pupils' attaining national standards is similar to the national proportion, the proportion attaining the higher Level 3 is likely to be above the national figure. This is a similar picture to the one found in science where the proportion attaining national standards are in line with national proportions with a significant proportion at the higher Level 3. Inspection findings show that in reading, pupils' standards, though still below nationally expected levels, are nevertheless beginning to rise. This is largely due to the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, which is beginning to impact positively on pupils' standards. A similar pattern is to be found in pupils' writing standards, although the impact of the National Literacy Strategy in this area has not been as significant and, as a result, pupils' standards in writing remain too low.

4. The attainment of children on entry to the school in the Foundation Stage shows a broad spread of ability. However, their overall attainment is below average when compared to pupils of that age nationally. Children in the Reception class, in the Foundation Stage of their education, make satisfactory progress in most areas of their learning. Good progress is made in their personal, social and emotional development. However, because over half of these pupils only spend two terms in the Foundation Stage, they do not, in that short space of time, attain the standards expected of pupils of that age when they enter Year 1, except in their personal, social and emotional development. In this area because of the good routines established in the Reception class, pupils settle well and work well with each other, sharing equipment and taking turns when required.

5. In communication, language and literacy, children begin to listen well but many have limited speaking skills. They begin to handle books competently and some are beginning to write their own names as well as recognise a few simple words. In the mathematical area of their work they are beginning to understand numbers and how many each figure represents, at least up to five. Children's' knowledge of the world increases steadily and they begin to understand about places other than Bilston. They are introduced to the computer and, in their creative development, begin to use a range of media, including paint. Opportunities for their physical development are more limited, largely as a result of a lack of large outdoor play equipment.

6. Inspection findings show that pupils in Year 2 at the end of Key Stage 1 attain below average standards in English, but average standards in mathematics and science. Attainment is improving in comparison with the results of last year as a higher proportion of pupils are working at the higher Level 3, which is above the national standard, particularly in mathematics and science. Pupils are beginning to read accurately, with developing expression, an awareness of punctuation and an understanding of what they read. However, the progress pupils are making and, as

a result, the standards they are attaining, is hampered by the lack of an appropriately structured system to teach reading skills in both the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. Writing skills of pupils are below average and there is little high attainment. Spelling is improving as is handwriting, with letters being reasonably well formed. Listening is generally good and pupils are becoming more confident speakers. Pupils' mathematical knowledge is similar to the national average with some pupils exceeding that average. The majority of pupils accurately add and subtract numbers to 50. They are becoming confident with simple multiplication or division. They know a range of two-dimensional shapes. Pupils' numeracy skills are now developing well. Literacy is used satisfactorily to support learning in other subjects, as is numeracy. In science, pupils' attainment is about average by the end of Year 2, although a number are working at the higher Level 3 which is above the national standard. Pupils have a broad knowledge across all areas of science, particularly their knowledge of living things, life processes and of materials and their properties. They are beginning to observe carefully and to use descriptive vocabulary to good effect, although more work remains to be done in this area.

7. Pupils by the end of Year 6 have attainment levels that are below average in English and mathematics, but about average in science. Pupils read with accuracy, but their understanding of what they read is more limited. Pupils write using the correct punctuation and know how to spell most commonly used words. Their written work displays the use of some complex sentences. Handwriting is satisfactory but the presentation of work can, on occasions, be untidy. A small minority of pupils have unsatisfactory listening skills and, whilst their speaking skills are improving, pupils often lack confidence in extended discussions. Pupils' literacy skills in Key Stage 2 are improving and are beginning to be used satisfactorily to support learning in other subjects. However, work remains to be done to improve aspects of pupils' writing in order for average standards to be attained by the age of 11.

8. In many respects, pupils' mathematical knowledge is about average. Pupils have secure number skills and they solve number problems accurately, using the four rules of number. They draw and interpret simple block graphs and pictograms with reasonable accuracy. Higher-attaining pupils interpret simple line graphs accurately and work competently in numbers to two decimal places. Their main weaknesses is their speed of working, largely as a result of a significant number having special educational needs, and this is likely to result in lower scores in the National Curriculum tests. Pupils' knowledge of science is about average. Scientific skills are being developed and used in a range of investigations, which promotes the learning of scientific knowledge. They have a sound understanding of physical process, materials and their properties as well as life processes and living things. Their scientific enquiry skills are well developed.

9. In Key Stage 1, pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress in mathematics, science, design and technology, physical education, art and design and music. As a result, pupils attain the nationally expected levels for seven-year-olds in these subject areas. The good progress made is largely due to the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy in mathematics, a good system of science planning and good teaching in these subjects. In addition, better progress is made in subjects such as these as pupils are less limited by their literacy deficiencies than in other subject areas. Although pupils do not attain nationally expected levels for seven-year-olds in English, history, geography and ICT they, nevertheless, make satisfactory progress given their below average prior attainment levels. Pupils' standards in religious education are similar to those expected by the locally agreed syllabus for the subject and pupils make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 1. Whilst pupils' progress is not unsatisfactory in any subject area, greater emphasis on a more structured approach to the teaching of reading and writing, as well as the continued implementation of the Literacy Strategy would increase the rate of pupils' progress and so raise their standards further.

10. In Key Stage 2, pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress, given their prior attainment levels, in mathematics, science, physical education, ICT and art and design. They make satisfactory progress in English, history, geography, music and design and technology. However, the good and satisfactory progress made in these

subjects is not reflected in the levels attained by the current Year 6 pupils. This is due to the fact that half of these pupils have special educational needs, and as such, do not attain the nationally expected levels for 11-year-olds in mathematics, English, history, geography, and ICT. As in Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education and so attain the levels expected by the locally agreed syllabus.

11. Higher-attaining pupils are adequately catered for by the school and the amount of progress made by this group is similar to other pupils given their prior attainment levels. There are variations, however, in the provision for this group of pupils. The progress they make is directly related to the quality of teaching they receive. In some classes, teachers plan work specifically for this group that is geared to their high prior attainment levels. However, this is not the case in a minority of classes where such pupils are expected to complete work that is similar to the rest of the pupils in the class. In these classes their progress is just satisfactory. Pupils who have English as an additional language have appropriate provision made for them and, as a result, their progress is similar to that made by their peers.

12. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans. This is largely as a result of the effective and sensitive support they receive from their teachers and particularly other support staff, as well as the good provision established by the school in order to help these pupils.

13. National test results for the past few years have been very well analysed to enable the school to monitor pupils' overall attainment and progress. In response to this analysis, targets for improvement have been appropriately set in English and mathematics. There is every indication to suggest that the school will be successful in meeting the performance targets it has set this year. There is no significant difference in the amount of progress made by boys and girls. A survey of parents showed that 97 per cent of parents are well satisfied with the amount of progress their children make. The school has done exceptionally well to raise its pupils' standards so significantly, particularly in mathematics and science, in the last years and has every right to be proud of its achievements.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

14. The school works hard to foster positive attitudes to learning and makes every effort to build the confidence and self-esteem of its pupils. As a result, they are enthusiastic and keen to learn. They are able, even from quite a young age, to concentrate for long periods and most are able to stay on task without constant supervision, although some find this harder than others. For example, in an English lesson the pupils worked hard to prepare an interesting synopsis of a chosen story as part of a book cover and were eager to put their ideas on paper. They asked for help when needed, but for the most part were able to sustain their efforts for the whole of the lesson. This enthusiasm for learning is aided by well-planned lessons, which are pitched at a level which provides a good degree of challenge as well as holding the pupils' interest. For a few pupils, particularly at the top end of the school,

even good teaching fails to engage their interest and they can “switch off” and refuse to pay attention. Unsatisfactory classroom management can sometimes aggravate the behaviour problems of those pupils who have special educational needs. Most pupils with special educational needs respond well in the small group sessions where they receive a good level of support.

15. Although one pupil was excluded last year for a short time, behaviour across the school is good. The pupils are polite and friendly and relationships between the pupils and adults in the school are similarly good. The provision of a good supply of small play equipment, such as hoops, balls and skipping ropes, and the large area available on which the pupils can play, means that break times are lively and generally amicable. Minor incidents of misbehaviour are quickly resolved. In lessons, pupils are generally quick to settle and prompt to follow instructions. In the few instances seen where behaviour was less good, particularly in Year 6, this related to pupils on the special needs register as having emotional and behavioural difficulties. Instances of unsatisfactory behaviour are promptly checked.

16. Levels of attendance are below those found in primary schools nationally and the levels of unauthorised absence are higher than those generally found. Levels of attendance have risen over the past two years. There is a significant minority of pupils who are late arriving at school in the morning.

17. The pupils grow in confidence as they progress through the school and as they start to assume responsibility for day to day routine tasks. Both classroom monitors and those pupils who undertake such activities as preparing the school hall for assemblies and operating the sound system and overhead projector, tackle their duties in a cheerful and positive way taking pride in their work. The pupils also engage actively in the charity fund raising and community activities, in response to the provision the school makes to support their social development. They can work co-operatively in pairs and small groups and respond well to the system of merit awards the school offers. In addition, many appreciate the opportunities to take part in competitive team sports.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

18. Across the school, the quality of teaching, including that of children in the Foundation Stage, is at least satisfactory in all lessons. Of these, the quality of teaching is good in 47 per cent and very good in a further 10 per cent of lessons. There are no lessons where the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is never less than satisfactory and, on occasions, it is good. A high proportion of good teaching is evident throughout both key stages. The good teaching that all pupils receive in most subject areas, particularly in mathematics and science, has a positive impact on the amount of progress in their learning that they make and, as a result, on the standards that they attain.

19. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. At that time, 76 per cent was considered to be satisfactory or better. This has now risen to 100 per cent. Of particular note is the improvement in teaching in

Key Stage 2 where, in 1997, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 66 per cent of lessons only. This has now risen to all of the lessons. In addition, the proportion of good and very good teaching has also increased throughout the school. This increase in the quality of teaching is as a result of an increased awareness of the need to monitor teachers' practice within their classroom. The headteacher and other senior teachers visit classrooms to both monitor the teaching and to work alongside teachers in order to develop their skills. The discussion that follows identifies focussed areas for improvement. Whilst this process is relatively new and in need of some further refinement, it nevertheless is having a positive impact on teaching quality. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in recent years has also given teachers a good framework for planning and more precise direction in the delivery of lessons. All these factors have made a contribution to the improvement in the quality of teaching and this in turn has had a favourable impact on the amount of progress pupils make in their learning. The teaching of literacy is variable and ranges from satisfactory on some occasions to good on others. The National Literacy Strategy has been soundly implemented but one or two areas require further development in order to raise further pupils' standards in English. For example more structure is required in the teaching of handwriting and spelling to pupils. In addition, more opportunities need to be provided to develop pupils' library, research and study skills. Furthermore, a more structured approach to the teaching of reading is needed in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. In the best practice, the teaching of literacy is lively and exciting with good use being made of texts to stimulate pupils and challenge their thinking. This ensures that pupils in these lessons make good progress.

20. The teaching of numeracy is good. There is an effective focus on the development of mental arithmetic with regular, challenging questioning at the start of most lessons. Teachers encourage pupils to explain their methods of calculating solutions to problems. Lessons develop well with appropriate activities being set to match pupils' prior attainment levels. The pupils enjoy their numeracy lessons, being well motivated by the work set. As a result, most pupils make good progress in their learning of mathematical skills and concepts.

21. The high proportion of good teaching is characterised by a variety of factors. Lessons are introduced in a way that catches pupils' imagination and gives a clear focus to the lesson. Similarly, teachers ask clear, concise questions that challenge pupils' understanding and require them to articulate their thoughts clearly. This was particularly noticeable in a very good Year 4/5 mathematics lesson where, following a brief reminder of what an acute, obtuse and right angle looked like, pupils were shown a series of cards containing one of these angles. They had to write the correct answer quickly on their white boards. The pupils really enjoyed this and were most keen to get the answers correct. The teacher then moved quickly on to introducing a protractor to pupils to teach them how to measure angles accurately. Through good use of the overhead projector all pupils were quickly able to see how to set up a protractor correctly, in order to measure the angle accurately. The teacher carefully graded the questions that followed to match pupils' prior attainment levels, so that all groups were able to experience success. Group work followed based on similar tasks of increasing difficulty, the level of difficulty being dependent on the pupils' prior attainment levels. Some pupils found the process difficult at first,

but, as a result of the teacher's high expectations and her persistent challenging of her pupils, all of them made very good progress in their learning during the course of the lesson. Consequently, by the end of the lesson all knew what a protractor was for and nearly all could use it accurately to measure both acute and obtuse angles.

22. Such good lessons are also well structured and proceed at a brisk pace. This was clearly seen in a very good Year 2 literacy lesson. In the lesson, the brisk pace of the introductory session, related to finding and using synonyms from a variety of texts but largely from the story 'Can't you sleep, Little Bear?', quickly fired pupils' enthusiasm and all were most keen to answer. The class was then divided into three groups led by the class teacher, classroom support assistant and the support teacher for pupils with English as an additional language. Tasks set for the pupils were well matched to their prior attainment levels and, because of the appropriateness of the tasks and small group size, much work was completed by all groups of pupils. As a result, all made very good progress and by the end of the lesson were clear as to what synonyms were and what use could be made of them.

23. Other characteristics of good lessons are where teachers manage their pupils well, expecting and getting good behaviour as well as managing the use of resources in such a way that enhances their pupils' learning. This was evident in a good Year 3/4 science lesson where pupils were investigating the conditions and habitats lived in by woodlice. The focus of the lesson, based on observation, prediction and 'fair testing' was carefully and clearly explained, leaving pupils in no doubt as to what they were expected to learn during the lesson. Resources were well prepared and the group work that followed was well organised and controlled by the teacher. Continuous, high quality questioning by the teacher ensured that there was a progressive development of pupils' investigative skills. Pupils became totally involved in their investigations and many were excited by it. Despite the pupils' obvious enthusiasm, the skill shown by the teacher in challenging her pupils ensured that they remained engrossed in their work and that good standards of behaviour were maintained. As a direct result good progress was made in pupils' learning.

24. Where teaching is less successful, though not unsatisfactory, such a high standard of behaviour is not always achieved. In addition, overlong introductions by the teacher means that pupils become less interested and can therefore be disruptive. This is particularly the case in classes, such as in Year 6, where there are a high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. Where this happens some pupils become bored and begin to disrupt the work of others. The pace of the lesson falls as a result of the teacher constantly having to try to get those pupils back to work. Consequently, in these cases, less work is completed and, as a result, pupils' progress in such lessons is barely satisfactory.

25. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. This is most noticeable in mathematics and science. In subjects where such knowledge is most secure, pupils' learning is enhanced.

26. Teachers' planning of pupils' work is good and often identifies what pupils of different levels of prior attainment will be required to do. This is particularly so in

English and mathematics. In addition, such plans identify what resources will be required during the lesson. These are used well by teachers to enhance pupils' learning and the amount of progress they make. However, in some other subjects work is less well planned and does not always identify what pupils of different prior attainment levels will be required to do.

27. The quality and use of day-to-day assessment is sound. Most teachers are skilled in using questions to check and challenge pupils' thinking and understanding. Most are also adept at asking good follow-up questions to pupils' initial responses. Good use is made of plenary sessions at the end of many lessons to assess what pupils have learned in that lesson and to reinforce further their subject knowledge and understanding. In mathematics, however, the school rightly recognises that there is still some work to be done in these areas in some classes. In subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT, teachers' recording of their pupils' attainments and the subsequent use of that to plan the next pieces of work for them is limited and, as a result, is unsatisfactory. Furthermore, the marking of pupils' work is variable, ranging from unsatisfactory, where work is barely marked at all, to very good, where pupils are given a clear indication of how well they have done and what they now need to do to continue to improve.

28. Pupils with special educational needs, as well as those with English as an additional language, are fully integrated into classroom activities. They are given tasks appropriate to their learning needs. Where relevant, these relate directly to the pupils' good individual education plans. Teachers give good support to their learning needs and extra effective support is often given by learning support assistants. Teachers effectively monitor the progress made by pupils with special educational needs. They are well supported in this by the good special educational needs co-ordinator. The teachers and co-ordinator in partnership, regularly assess and record pupils' progress in order to plan the next work for them. Very occasionally, in some classrooms, these pupils' needs are not sufficiently catered for. This is usually where there is insufficient recognition of some of these pupils' limited attention spans. Overall, these pupils are well taught and make good progress in lessons at a level commensurate with their prior attainment levels.

29. In a survey carried out prior to the inspection, a small group of parents were concerned about the work their children were required to do at home. The inspection team feels that the work pupils are required to do at home is inconsistent and that, whilst the school does have a homework policy, more consistency in its use is required right across the school. Also there is a need to share such a policy with parents so that they have a clear understanding of what their children are required to do at home.

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

30. The previous report found the curriculum to be unsatisfactory. The lack of breadth and balance was a key issue, as was the lack of reflection of the school aims in practice. The school did not promote sound standards. Programmes of study

in design and technology, geography, history and ICT were not being delivered at either key stage. There was insufficient attention paid to using and applying mathematics in either key stage. Provision for personal and social education was not planned satisfactorily. Few plans referred to the programmes of study. Curriculum delivery was weakened by a lack of detailed schemes of work in most subjects. Curricular provision for children under five was not organised effectively. Since then, the curriculum for the Foundation Stage has been developed. This is satisfactory although not all areas are linked firmly yet to the Early Learning Goals for children in the Reception class. Planning for these children is now satisfactory. The school has made very good progress in addressing the weaknesses identified. A broad curriculum is in place for Key Stages 1 and 2 which now reflects the aims of the school. Statutory requirements are met but some work remains to be done to ensure that sufficient time is allocated to all subjects to enable a good balance to be maintained. At present, time is limited for design and technology, geography, history and music to be delivered effectively and, as a result, balance is unsatisfactory. The quality of planning is good, with a consistent approach by all teachers to long, medium and short term planning. Inconsistencies remain in some subjects, however, in ensuring work is matched to the needs of higher and lower attaining pupils. There are occasions when higher attaining pupils are presented with tasks which are undemanding, whilst lower attainers are expected to cope with the same work as the rest of the class. The adoption of national guidance as schemes of work now provides an effective framework for subjects other than literacy and numeracy which follows the national strategies. The issue of using and applying mathematics has been well addressed, as has the provision for pupils' personal and social education. These are now satisfactory. Religious education follows the Locally Agreed syllabus.

31. The National Literacy strategy has been effectively implemented and is beginning to have a positive effect on raising standards, in reading in particular. Its impact on spelling and writing is less apparent in both key stages. The school is aware of the need to address writing and this is a priority within the school development plan. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented and has been very effective in raising standards in mathematics. The use of literacy across other curricular areas is not always evident in planning, for example through the identification of subject specific vocabulary that needs to be developed. The additional literacy support and booster classes are having a positive impact and are an effective contribution to improving standards. The use of ICT in the classroom in order to support all areas of the curriculum is an area for further development.

32. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs as well as for those for whom English is an additional language. They are fully included in all aspects of the curriculum and there are good opportunities for developing their basic skills, knowledge and understanding, in English and mathematics in particular. As a result of the good provision, such pupils make good gains in learning. Pupils' individual education plans are good and effectively move learning forward when work is matched appropriately to targets in these plans. However, this is not consistent in all subjects.

33. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory, although most activities are aimed at Key Stage 2 pupils. They contribute effectively to pupils' personal development. Pupils enjoy activities such as choir, football, cricket and basketball. Attendance at these activities is good. A weakness is the lack of opportunity for a residential experience for the oldest pupils. The good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, raises attention to moral issues, awareness to the dangers of drug's misuse and provides sex education for the oldest pupils. The use of circle time is effectively promoting an awareness of others as well as encouraging caring attitudes. A scheme of work is being introduced which will underpin the provision for personal and social education.

34. There are good links established with the local community. Strong links exist with the local church and the vicar is a regular visitor to the school. Sporting links with Wolverhampton Wanderers football club and musical occasions when the choir performs for the senior citizens and sings for charity at the local railway station, are good examples of community involvement. The school enjoys good links with the local secondary schools and other feeder schools in the area, with regular termly meetings for the senior management team and in the sharing of ideas and curricular initiatives.

35. The school has improved its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development since the last inspection and provision is now good in most areas. Pupils' spiritual development is actively fostered during morning assemblies, where the pupils are able to experience Christian worship within a range of local and world-wide traditions. They are encouraged to take an active part and during the inspection week many were involved in presenting a musical on the theme of friendship. This delighted both their fellow pupils and parents, who had been invited for the occasion. Opportunities exist in other areas of the curriculum, such as history and geography, to consider the place of the Christian tradition within the local community. Consideration of several other world faiths takes place as part of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education.

36. Moral and social development is actively fostered. The school has a good range of strategies to raise self-esteem and foster a sense of responsibility and pride in doing things well. School rules are clearly presented and consistently applied. An awareness of the pupils' place in the wider community is raised through the charity fund raising that takes place throughout the year and the school makes good use of its local amenities to enrich the curriculum. This includes visits to the local church, for example, both for services and to enhance work in history, geography and religious education.

37. Cultural development is actively promoted through the use of visiting artists and performers, as well as through the school's own emphasis within the building on the visual arts. Every possible space is used to present attractive images, whether of the children's own work, or that of visiting artists. This makes the whole building attractive and stimulating as the pupils move from class to class or through the corridors to the playground. Visits are made to places of interest to give the pupils some experience of other cultures. Whilst those pupils for whom English is an additional language are sometimes taught using materials reflecting their first language and home culture, this experience is rarely extended to the rest of the school. More could be done to raise all pupils' awareness of the rich diversity of cultures represented with the population of Great Britain.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

38. The school takes good care of its pupils within well managed classes where the pupils are offered clear and consistent guidelines on the conduct and levels of hard work expected from them. Relationships between the staff and pupils are good and the teachers take every opportunity to reinforce the school's aim that every pupil will achieve as well as possible.

39. Since the last inspection report, the teaching staff has had the opportunity to review the school's arrangements for child protection. The headteacher liaises with outside agencies as necessary. A new entrance hall has been created which makes a secure and welcoming point of entry to the school. A good start has been made in establishing procedures to review health and safety issues within the day to day running of the school. For example, a full audit has been carried out and some necessary remedial work has recently been completed. More now needs to be done to ensure that a close watch is kept on potential health and safety hazards related to necessary building maintenance. Formal procedures to involve all staff in potential risk assessment are being developed.

40. The previous report identified insufficient follow-up for the unauthorised absence of some pupils as an area of concern. The school is now working hard to ensure that parents are aware of their responsibilities to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. As a result, the levels of attendance have risen significantly over the last two years, although they are still low, and the punctuality of a minority of the pupils is poor.

41. All reviews of pupils identified with special educational needs are carried out at the appropriate times. There are a number of individual education plans, which set specific educational targets. The pupils with special educational need benefit from extra support within small groups. Effective support is also offered to pupils for whom English is not their first language. Outside agencies are involved appropriately in the support of these pupils through the Local Education Authority area teams.

42. The school works hard to ensure that every pupil feels valued and that they are made aware when they have achieved particularly well. The merit system rewards success, whether in academic areas or for some other sort of special achievement and the whole school celebrates when any child has earned a given number of merit points. Good attendance is similarly celebrated. In this way, and in the consistent application of the school's behaviour policy, which sets clear guidelines for expected behaviour, the pupils are enabled to grow in confidence and self-discipline as they progress through the school.

43. The systems for assessing children's work in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall, although there are weaknesses. For example, the assessment and recording of reading lacks guidance to the teacher and other adults about the progress children are making. Plans are in hand to introduce a Foundation Stage assessment profile in the near future. The school's provision for the early identification of children who may have a specific need means that children with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language have action taken at the earliest opportunity to meet their specific needs.

44. In Key Stage 1 and 2, assessment procedures are good in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Informal assessment is part of the weekly and half termly planning process, in addition to the formal assessments that are undertaken. Assessment information is analysed and used to set group targets in literacy as well as personal targets for individual pupils. There is a good system for recording pupils' progress in English, mathematics, science and ICT. The good systems developed in these subjects have not yet extended to other areas of the curriculum. This is unsatisfactory, as is the use of assessment information to inform the future planning of work for pupils. This is at an early stage of development in these other subjects. Individual pupil profiles are in place but these together with school portfolios, need to be further developed. This has been identified by the school in its development plan. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Whilst work is marked regularly the quality of marking is not always helpful in guiding pupils as to what they need to do to improve further. This is unsatisfactory.

45. The school cares well for all pupils who have a specific need. This is due largely to the good leadership provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator who is very active in ensuring pupils' needs are met. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans are of a good quality and targets reviewed regularly. Additional support is very well targeted. All teachers and support staff show good awareness of the needs of their pupils and their effective support enables pupils to progress well given their prior attainment levels and, as a result improve their overall standards. The information in pupils' individual education plans is used effectively by most teachers to help plan the next stage of their pupils' learning. The school fully complies with statutory requirements for pupils with special educational needs.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

46. Parents and carers of pupils at the school are supportive of the provision the school makes for their children. They feel that the children make good progress and that they are expected to work hard and achieve their best. The way the school works closely with parents, the good quality of the teaching and the level of information they are given on their children's progress are all appreciated. They feel that the school is helping their children to develop as mature and responsible individuals. Amongst a small number of parents, there were concerns expressed about the behaviour of the pupils, the management of the school and the range of extra curricular activities being provided. Whilst the school has had frequent changes of headteacher during the past few years, the inspection team had no concerns about the quality of the current management. Poor behaviour is restricted to a small number of pupils with identified emotional and behavioural difficulties and the school provides a satisfactory level of extra curricular activities for its size.

47. The last inspection report identified as a key issue the need to further the partnership with parents so as to involve them more fully in the life of the school and the work of their children. Since then, the "Patchwork" project has been established. This enables parents of pupils in Years 1 and 2 to come into school one afternoon a week to consider how best they can support their children's learning at home. The

opportunity is given to make mathematics' games and to engage in educational activities with their children during school hours. As yet, this project only involves a relatively small number of parents, but is very valuable nonetheless. The school provides a satisfactory level of information, through parents' evenings and the annual report on each pupil, on the progress each pupil is making. The quality and content of individual reports is not consistent from year to year. The school does not yet provide the parents with information on what is to be taught and the topics to be covered each term, although there are plans to introduce a greater level of information for parents in the near future. At the moment, this limits the extent to which those parents, who wish to do so, are able to support their children's learning at home.

48. Many parents come in to school to attend class assemblies and a number are involved in providing transport for away sports matches. They are also generous in their support for the charity fund raising undertaken by the school.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

49. The previous inspection found the headteacher provided effective leadership for the school with satisfactory support from the governors. It also found that not all statutory requirements were being met, there was a need to improve the planning and co-ordination of the curriculum and that subject co-ordinators' roles needed to be developed. In addition, school development and budgetary planning needed to be improved and the shortcomings of the auditor's report needed to be addressed. Since that time very good progress has been made. All issues identified at that time as causing concern have been improved, although there is still some work remaining to be done in further developing subject co-ordinators' roles and monitoring curriculum development.

50. Since the last inspection, the school has had several headteachers, the current one being appointed in January 2000. Indeed, a small proportion of parents in the questionnaire circulated prior to the inspection, expressed concern about the leadership and management of the school, largely as a result of the high turnover of headteachers. Inspection findings show that the current headteacher provides good leadership and has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. He works closely with his governors and members of staff to continue to raise standards, improve the quality of teaching and give the school a clear purpose and direction. His clear vision for the future is evident in his determination to raise pupils' standards of attainment by focussing on several key strategies. For example, the need to continue to improve standards of numeracy by the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. In addition, he recognises the need to raise pupils' standards of writing, which was identified as an area of concern, and which has now been built into the school's development plan as a major priority. The good school development plan also identifies other areas for development notably related to raising standards, developing an effective school self-evaluation system, in order to continue to improve the quality of teaching, and to develop resources, related to history and geography in particular. It is a good plan in which costs and success criteria are clearly identified.

51. The staff are well supported by an able and caring headteacher who recognises the importance of developing a strong team identity. Under his leadership, teachers and support staff work together effectively.

52. The aims of the school, reviewed most recently in September 1999, are good. They are clearly defined and reflect a commitment to pupils attaining high academic standards and the development of a positive ethos where there are harmonious working relationships between staff and pupils. The aims of the school have underpinned much of its work and life. On occasions, however, they are not always reflected in practice. For example, the lack of whole-school consistency in the marking of pupils' work and their standards of presentation means that the practice in these two areas is variable, ranging from good in some classes to unsatisfactory in others. As a result, the highest possible pupil-standards are not, in some classes, being attained. Within school, all pupils are valued and cared for and are encouraged to develop into well-motivated and self-disciplined pupils. The school is largely successful in its aim of promoting positive attitudes that help pupils develop self-confidence and increase their self-esteem.

53. The governors, even though many are relatively new, have a sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The major factors underpinning the governing body's decisions are the need to provide the best quality education for pupils and the need to raise educational standards. An appropriate structure of committees has been established to utilise governors' skills. There is a commitment to self-improvement and training, both as a whole governing body and through attendance at local authority courses. Governors' understanding of the community that the school serves is good and they are therefore well placed to act as a critical friend to the headteacher. However, they need to raise their awareness of the school curriculum and teaching by making classroom visits on a more regular basis. A good working relationship is developing between the governors and headteacher and accountability and financial monitoring roles are effective. However, they are not yet fully involved in shaping the school development plan or in evaluating the progress the school makes towards achieving its targets. Governors understand their strategic responsibilities but this aspect of their role is underdeveloped.

54. To assist its basic aim of raising standards, the school has collected a good range of data to enable it to monitor pupils' progress. The analysis is well managed by the headteacher who can provide detailed information on every year group of pupils in the school. The information is beginning to be used to provide realistic and challenging targets for the school, particularly in English and mathematics. This now needs to be extended in order to provide similarly realistic and challenging targets for individual pupils.

55. There are some structures and procedures in place to monitor standards and provision. Overall, these procedures are satisfactory. The headteacher and one or two subject co-ordinators monitor teaching in classrooms and he also monitors pupils' learning by scrutinising teachers' planning and, on occasions, pupils' work in books. However, there is no structured plan to monitor the ongoing development of

the school, where curriculum, teaching and other aspects of school life are regularly reviewed over a two or three year period. In addition, the role of the subject co-ordinator, helping and advising colleagues as the need arises, needs to be reviewed. Greater clarity of this role in relation to the role of the headteacher and other senior managers is also needed.

56. The leadership and management of special educational needs are good. The coordinator has a good knowledge and understanding of the requirements of pupils with special educational needs and ensures that all staff are aware of the provision available. The provision is well supported by a well-qualified and very able team of learning support assistants, who work very closely with class teachers. The progress of all groups of pupils with special educational needs is closely monitored and the co-ordinator ensures that the targets in their educational support plans are linked with the particular needs of pupils. All the requirements of the Code of Practice are fully met. The recent appointment of a governor to oversee special educational needs will enable the governing body to fulfil its statutory obligations in a more rigorous manner. Current resources are appropriate and used well, particularly in literacy and numeracy.

57. There are good systems in place for appraisal and performance management. The professional development of staff is well targeted at improving school performance. National funds for this are used well. For example, the training in literacy, numeracy and ICT has, and continues to have, a positive impact on raising standards in these subjects. There are appropriate arrangements in place for the induction of newly qualified teachers.

58. Financial planning systems are good and this is a major improvement from the time of the last inspection. The school applies the best value principles in all its purchases, and the headteacher and governors closely monitor the school's expenditure against its available budget. The governing body is fully involved in the setting of the school's budget through the school development plan. Financial planning and the school development plan are closely linked to ensure continuing rises in standards and the overall quality of education offered by the school. All these are improvements from the last inspection. Financial decisions are related to their impact on raising standards and the school has been successful recently in procuring a number of additional funds to support its planning.

59. School financial and administration procedures are good and the headteacher is well supported by the able office staff. The school secretary is an asset to the school and undertakes the day-to-day financial administration efficiently. Reports are prepared for the governors' finance committee meetings and there are efficient systems to control office income and expenditure. The recommendations of the last auditors' report have all been accepted and acted upon to further improve the schools' financial planning and administration.

60. The school has sufficient teachers and has extra support staff, who are employed very effectively to support lower attaining groups of pupils, as well as pupils for whom English is an additional language. The staffing is more stable than in recent years and the current staff are experienced and well qualified. This has been a significant influence on the rising levels of attainment across the school. The accommodation overall is good. Classrooms are spacious and are enhanced by the high quality displays of pupils' work. Such displays are indeed a feature of many other areas of the school and contribute greatly to the overall quality of the areas in which pupils carry out their work. The library and hall are well used to support teaching and learning in a number of areas of the curriculum, and a new support room for pupils with special educational needs is being used most effectively. The outside areas include grassed and hard surfaced areas. A recent innovation has been the development of outside areas to support science work and the new play area for the youngest children. Overall, resources across most subjects are satisfactory. The school is aware of the need to replenish and replace resources of non-fiction books in the library. The school lacks an adequate supply of large, outdoor play equipment for the youngest children in the Foundation stage. Recent budget funding for all curricular areas is intended to help to remedy the resource deficiencies in areas such as design and technology and history. Currently, the school is making good use of its available resources to support the teaching and learning of most subjects across the school very effectively.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. In order to build on the many positive aspects of the school and further improve the standards of work and quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff in co-operation with the local education authority should:

- (1) Raise pupils' standards in English throughout the school by:
  - improving the quality of pupils' writing as well as the amount and range of work pupils are expected to produce in some classes;
  - improving pupils' spelling;
  - ensuring that there is a more consistent approach to the development of pupils' handwriting and presentation skills;
  - developing further their library, research and study skills;
  - developing a more structured approach to the teaching of reading, including the recording of pupils' progress, in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1.(Paragraphs: 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 19, 50, 52, 66, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76)
  
- (2) Review the balance of the curriculum offered to pupils in order to:
  - ensure that sufficient time is made available to cover the full programmes of study in all subject areas;
  - increase the pace of lessons in some classes so that sufficient work is completed by all pupils.(Paragraphs: 24, 30, 63, 77, 87, 105, 110, 118, 125, 131)
  
- (3) Improve the procedures for the assessment and recording of pupils' work by:
  - extending the good practice in English, mathematics, science and ICT to all other subjects;
  - using the information from the assessment of pupils' work to plan subsequent work for them, as well as set targets for them to achieve;
  - improving the quality and consistency of the marking of pupils' work so that it gives them a clear indication of what they need to do to continue to improve.(Paragraphs: 27, 43, 44, 78, 88, 97, 100, 105, 111, 118, 125, 131, 136)
  
- (4) Review the current approach to the monitoring of pupils' work and the quality of teaching by:
  - developing a more structured approach to enable subject co-ordinators to be able to check the rate of pupils' learning in their subject and to provide support for other teachers;
  - reviewing the roles and responsibilities of the school's senior managers with regard to the monitoring of teaching and other aspects of school life.

(Paragraphs: 19, 53, 55, 78, 89, 100, 105, 111, 118, 123, 125, 131, 136)

In addition to the issues above, the following should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Providing appropriate large outdoor play equipment for pupils in the Foundation Stage. (Paragraphs: 61, 69)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10	47	43	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	137
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	56

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	46

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	24

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	10	7	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	13	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (65)	82 (88)	88 (96)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	13	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (73)	88 (88)	88 (77)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	9	10	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	15	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (50)	79 (50)	95 (82)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	13	13	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (41)	68 (36)	89 (64)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

NB: Where the number of boys or girls are ten or fewer, individual results are not reported

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	10
Black – African heritage	5
Black – other	0
Indian	19
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	82
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

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

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

### *Teachers and classes*

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.8
Average class size	22.8

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	68

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### *Financial information*

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	333 916
Total expenditure	333 966
Expenditure per pupil	2 455
Balance brought forward from previous year	(31 653)
Balance carried forward to next year	(31 703)

## *Results of the survey of parents and carers*

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	133
Number of questionnaires returned	37

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	35	11	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	30	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	43	8	3	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	46	8	0	0
The teaching is good.	59	35	6	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	43	6	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	21	6	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	24	3	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	46	48	3	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	40	45	6	6	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	46	6	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	35	6	8	8

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

62. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory although there have been significant changes since the previous inspection. Nursery provision is no longer part of the school. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but the pace of lessons is not always brisk enough. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but planning to the Early Learning Goals is not yet secure in all areas of learning. For example, planning for literacy and mathematics follows the literacy and numeracy strategies rather than reflecting the “stepping stones” and Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage curriculum. The adults work well together and support staff make a valuable contribution to children’s learning. However, learning activities are not always planned to meet the range of prior attainment levels in the Foundation Stage. This results in underachievement by the potentially higher-attaining pupils. Children are interested and enthusiastic. They make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning except for personal social and emotional development in which they make good gains in learning.

63. Children are admitted to school in September and January of the academic year in which they reach statutory school age. Careful attention is given to helping children settle into school and easing the transition from nursery or home. The majority have attended nursery prior to starting school. At the time of the inspection there were 17 children in the reception class all of whom had reached the age of five. Although early assessment information presents a more favourable picture, all of the evidence available indicates that attainment on entry to school is below the expected level for children of this age in all areas of learning. By the time they start in Year 1, they are unlikely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in the areas of learning except in personal social and emotional development where the majority are likely to reach the standards expected for their age. There is early identification of children having special educational needs. These children together with those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress in their learning.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

64. By the end of the Reception class, most children meet the Early Learning Goals in this area. They make good progress, as a result of good teaching, in developing social skills and positive attitudes to work. When asked to do so, they work well co-operatively, working and playing amicably together. They are kind and helpful to each other and most behave well. Children use equipment and facilities in the classroom with confidence. They share and take turns, for example, as they were when waiting to make honey sandwiches. They know how to tidy away at the end of a session and respond quickly to instructions from the adults. In question and answer sessions as well as in ‘circle time’, when children sit together to share their thoughts, they take turns to speak. Children show respect for the views and feelings

of others. In their personal hygiene children are quite independent. Teachers are skilled at managing and encouraging children so that they make good progress in this area.

## **Communication language and literacy**

65. The provision made to promote children's communication, language and literacy skills is satisfactory. Most children listen attentively but a significant number have limited skills to explain themselves clearly and several have speech problems which hinder their progress in developing effective communication skills. Children develop positive attitudes to books and enjoy stories. However, the pace of their learning is often insufficient because tasks are not matched well enough to their needs and attitudes. This is particularly so for higher-attaining children who do not make as much progress as they could. For example, in an extended writing session all children practised writing their name using whiteboards, when some children could have been more significantly challenged with a more imaginative and demanding task. Most children write their first name with reasonable accuracy, although some children reverse letters. A quarter of the class are unable to write their first name accurately. Most children recognise many initial sounds but very few write independently. Only one child reads a text accurately. Most higher-attaining pupils can recall words already learnt and also begin to build simple words, using picture clues, for example to 're-tell' a story. The lower-attaining children do not have a reading book. There is little verbal response because of their very poor speech and they struggle to remember a word when told. The current reading records of the teacher are not helpful, as they do not provide evaluative or diagnostic comments to identify areas of weakness. There is limited response from parents through the home reading diary. Children rarely write for a wide range of purposes. There is little evidence of lists, messages and invitations, for example, or for structured play which would show purposeful opportunities for writing. The majority of children require a good deal of adult support in writing tasks. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Adults talk to children in a lively way, explaining how to make a wormery, for instance, and children respond with enthusiasm. This promotes speaking and listening effectively. Literacy skills are developed through sharing 'big books' together as a class. Children extended their understanding of information books through a non-fiction text about minibeasts in such a lesson. In spite of satisfactory teaching and learning most children are unlikely to achieve the expected standards in this area of learning.

## **Mathematical development**

66. By the end of the Reception class, most children are unlikely to meet the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. Higher-attaining children and some average children make good progress in recognising and naming solid shapes and differentiating between two-and three-dimensional shapes. They count to 10 and beyond, add two numbers together for example 3 and 3 to make 6 and can draw a set of 4 bicycles. The most able confidently add one more and create repeat patterns using two shapes and two colours. They recognise 'o'clock times and have a good grasp of mathematical language such as longer / larger, heavy / light, full and empty. Average children count to 10 and sequence these numbers in order. They form numbers to 5 correctly and complete simple graphs, with support. They identify 'odd one out'. Lower-attaining children do not have a secure grasp of mathematical language such as 'largest'. In addition, some numbers are reversed. Also they do not understand 'one more than 6 is 7', for example. These children are

unable to create a repeat pattern and have little concept of o'clock. Whilst pupils receive satisfactory teaching and, as a result, make satisfactory progress, the majority are unlikely to reach the expected level by the end of the Reception class.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

67. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is below the level expected when they start school. They make steady progress but the majority are unlikely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area by the time they leave the Reception class. They use photographs of themselves, recognise similarities and differences and explore change. Simple time lines of the day's events help to develop their awareness and understanding of the passage of time and they begin to gain a sense of the past through language such as yesterday, tomorrow, night and day. Through observation of the natural world children develop early scientific skills, for example, recognising different minibeasts, using magnifiers, creating a wormery and growing plants and flowers. In one lesson the children made honey sandwiches. Good questioning by the teacher developed their limited knowledge and understanding of where honey came from. Most had never tasted honey. They could not name different kinds of bread and when shown a 'hedgehog loaf' guesses included 'tiger' 'zebra' and 'caterpillar' bread. Limited literacy skills impeded the ability of many children to describe and explain well. The interesting tasks and good teaching in this lesson led to good gains in learning overall, insufficient opportunities are provided for exciting experiences such as this which enhance the curriculum in the Foundation Stage. Not enough use is made of technology. Most children are at an early stage of basic awareness when using the computer. There is limited evidence of the use of the computer to write, save or print work. Visitors to school, such as the policeman, fireman and vicar help children to learn about the roles of people who help us. Good use is made of the local area, such as visits to the shops and the library. Children learn about maps and places in the world as they take turns to take 'Little Bear' on an adventure, producing photographs and some early copy writing of his journeys. Stories from the bible increase their knowledge of Christianity, festivals and major events of the church calendar, satisfactorily. The quality of teaching pupils receive in this area is satisfactory.

## **Physical development**

68. By the end of the Reception class, skills in this area of learning remain below the expected level because the lack of large outdoor play equipment hampers their progress in developing their skills. Fine motor skills are developed satisfactorily through opportunities to cut, stick and control tools such as pencils and paint brushes although fine motor skills are below the expected level for a significant minority. Success in these areas varies. Most children have reasonable control by the time they leave the reception class. The lack of quality wheeled toys and climbing apparatus in the newly developed outdoor play area hampers children's progress in developing good co-ordination. As a result skills in this area do not progress as well as they should. Although the overall quality of teaching in this area is satisfactory, there is little evidence of effective planning for structured play, for example in the outdoor house or in using role play or other equipment. The quality of this play is sometimes limited by the lack of planned teacher intervention to extend the learning.

## **Creative development**

69. By the end of the Foundation Stage skills in this area remain below the expected level for a significant proportion of children, in spite of satisfactory teaching and steady gains in learning. Children paint self-portraits as well as pictures of minibeasts. They use pastels to draw sunflowers and create bubble patterns and line patterns rolling marbles in paint. Children learn to stick stripes onto yellow balloons to make bees. However the range of media experienced is limited to paint, crayon, pastels and collage mainly. There is limited evidence of the early skills in observational drawing being taught. Children do not know about artists and their work. Role play activities are provided through 'Bilston Market', 'the home corner', the outdoor house, and some role play resources, such as dressing up clothes. However, the lack of structure and teacher intervention limits the quality of such play. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for the development of musical skills supported by a visiting specialist. Children enjoy singing action songs, exploring percussion instruments and making simple rhythms. They make satisfactory progress in acquiring these skills.

## **ENGLISH**

70. The results of the year 2000 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 show that the pupils' standards in English are similar to the national average. The proportion of pupils exceeding the national average is also similar to the proportions that do so nationally. When compared with similar schools, results were well above average. Inspection findings for the current Year 6 group show that these pupils' standards are below national standards. Trends over the last three years indicate that standards are rising well. The high proportion of pupils (50 per cent) with special educational needs in the current Year 6 cohort, as well as a significant level of pupil mobility (25 per cent), are major factors contributing to below average standards. Given their prior attainment pupils make satisfactory progress in spite of below average standards. This is largely due to the effects of the National Literacy strategy, which has improved reading standards. Other factors influencing pupils' progress include additional literacy support, family literacy project and the commitment of the present headteacher and staff to raising pupils' standards. Good provision is made for pupils who have special educational needs. As a result they achieve well, given their prior levels of attainment. Those pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and make appropriate progress as a result.

71. The end of Key Stage 1 tests in 2000 show that pupils' performance in reading is well below the national average and below the national average in writing. The proportion of pupils exceeding the national average in reading is well below average and in writing it is close to the national average. When compared with similar schools, results in reading are similar to the national average and are above average in writing. Trends over time show that attainment has risen very slightly in reading and writing. Inspection findings for the current Year 2 pupils show attainment to be below average.

72. Standards in speaking and listening at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are similar to those achieved nationally. Pupils in Year 2 listen attentively to their teacher and each other. They are eager to answer questions as was seen in a

literacy session when quick fire questioning by the teacher engaged pupils enthusiastically in giving their ideas and opinions when searching for synonyms in various texts. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to engage in discussions. Consequently, pupils gain confidence in speaking aloud. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. During Key Stage 2, all pupils including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Consequently, by the end of Year 6 most pupils demonstrate average skills in speaking and listening, although a significant minority do not have the necessary skills to engage in extended conversations. Greater evidence of drama to promote speaking and listening and develop confidence and self esteem would enhance the provision for these important skills. Listening skills are a weakness in Year 6 where a number of pupils do not listen attentively and, as a result, are potentially disruptive in the lesson. This is managed appropriately by the teacher, on most occasions. Many pupils volunteer ideas and engage in discussion but a significant proportion do not have a wide

vocabulary. For instance, few pupils could explain the meaning of 'texture' in a design and technology lesson.

73. Reading standards are below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Whilst higher-attaining Year 2 pupils read with a good degree of accuracy and fluency, often with good expression, average readers read hesitantly and do not always read with meaning. Below average readers are close to the average reader – with developing fluency and expression and in their attempts to use phonic skills to help build three letter words. However, they require more support from adults to help them use phonic clues. Higher-attaining pupils can explain terms such as 'author' and 'illustrator' but most pupils are not familiar with any author's name. The good opportunities for reading in groups, individually and as a whole class, in literacy sessions are having a positive effect on reading standards by the end of Year 2. Reading diaries and records, in their present form, are not very helpful in identifying where pupils need to improve. They are maintained more effectively in Year 2, than in other year groups, but could be more purposeful and informative. In Key Stage 2 higher-attaining pupils read fluently with few errors and most are able to self-correct. Both higher-attaining and average readers use phonic skills and other strategies to establish meaning. Lower-attaining pupils are much more hesitant and are unable to self-correct. Comprehension skills are weak for these pupils. Most pupils have a very limited knowledge of authors, with reference only to Roald Dahl and Dick King-Smith from higher-attaining pupils. Although books are taken home, this does not happen on a regular basis. As with Key Stage 1, reading records are not sufficiently informative and purposeful because they lack diagnostic information to move reading forward. This does not contribute effectively to pupils' standards in reading. Although higher-attaining pupils read a reasonable range of books and express some preference for authors, the majority do not read widely and few select non-fiction books by choice. Skills of inference and deduction are limited to the most able readers. Most pupils know how to use a dictionary. A few pupils belong to the public library, with all pupils borrowing from the school library. Older pupils are aware of the colour coding system in the school library but library skills are not developed systematically as pupils move through the school. The spacious library is an attractive resource but is underused for research and private study. Resources in the library are limited in some subjects, for example, in religious education, and non-fiction books generally are in short supply. During their time in both key stages all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in reading.

74. Writing skills are below average at the end of both key stages and are the weakest element of the English curriculum. Pupils enter Year 1 with below average skills because they have not worked at a sufficiently brisk pace and expectations have been too low, particularly for higher attaining pupils. They write for a satisfactory range of purposes, which include stories, news diary entries as well as grammar and punctuation. At the end of Key Stage 1 the well matched activities ensure that the higher-attaining pupils are well challenged to develop their skills further. In one lesson the groups were able to develop their knowledge and understanding of synonyms effectively, largely as a result of the well organised and well resourced activities that provided good opportunities for all pupils. Handwriting and presentation skills are a weakness for a significant proportion of pupils,

including higher-attaining pupils. Most do not join their writing and a few do not form letters accurately. A few more able pupils demonstrate lively writing styles with interesting story openings such as “I bet you can’t guess what I saw – presents – yes just loads of presents!....” Grammar, punctuation and phonic skills are developed systematically. Higher-attaining pupils use capital letters and full stops accurately and show an awareness of question marks in their writing, making steady progress overall. Average pupils show some awareness of full stops and are beginning to sequence their ideas logically. There are weaknesses in spelling common words such as ‘of’ and there is some incorrect use of capital letters. Sentences, whilst soundly structured, tend to be repetitive. Lower-attaining pupils struggle to form letters with many incorrect formations and uneven sized letters. Often work is copied under the teacher’s writing. These pupils are unable to write a sentence or phrase independently. Spelling is a weakness and there is a limited awareness of basic punctuation, such as full stops. The proportion of pupils at the higher levels is below average.

75. By the end of Key Stage 2, although pupils write for an increasing range of purpose, few write at length. For the most able, there is evidence of the use of paragraphs and skills in punctuation are extended to the use of speech marks, question marks and exclamation marks. Presentation and handwriting skills vary between year groups but standards improve in Year 5 and 6 where there is evidence of clear expectations for the presentation of work. The good range of writing includes stories, limericks and Kennings. Non-fiction accounts, such as ‘how a fleece works’, persuasive writing such as the argument for and against fox hunting, and information writing are a few of the many writing tasks pupils undertake. The most able use ‘bullet points’ to order a piece of non-fiction writing on spider personification in poetry writing in the style of ‘The Wind’, as well as good descriptive language when writing stories. Few pupils work at this higher level. Most pupils write in ink using a cursive style in the case of average and higher-attaining pupils. There are weaknesses in spelling for a significant proportion of pupils because they are not secure with spelling patterns. For average pupils, ideas, when writing, are not always sustained. Words are often missed out. Sometimes good links are made with other subjects, thus reinforcing literacy skills in the process.

76. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good and very good teaching seen in both key stages. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. In the very good teaching, teachers are clear about what it is they want pupils to learn. What pupils are required to learn is shared with them at the lesson outset so that pupils know what they are expected to do. Very good subject knowledge, good planning and clearly matched tasks are all characteristics of the very good teaching seen in several lessons. The teaching has a clear focus and all pupils are fully involved. Brisk pace and high expectations motivate pupils well. Skilful intervention by the teacher and well deployed support staff moves the learning on well. By contrast in the weaker teaching, expectations are not high enough and the pace at which the lesson proceeds is pedestrian. The lack of appropriately matched tasks results in undemanding work for higher-attaining pupils while some lower-attaining pupils complete too little work in the time allowed. Sometimes behaviour is unsatisfactory for a minority and this prevents the lesson from progressing well. Marking is a

weakness. Although work is marked regularly, it does not always provide constructive comments, which help pupils to improve their work.

77. The co-ordinator provides sound management for the subject. The successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has been well managed. However, he needs to have a wider knowledge and understanding of Literacy from the Foundation Stage and through Key Stage 1 to enable him to have a wider overview of English across the school. Although monitoring has been undertaken, a more structured approach is now needed focussing clearly on teaching and its effect on learning, in order to improve standards. This, together with a greater use of assessment analysis for target setting, will further inform teachers' planning and help to raise standards. The planned tracking of pupils' standards will also help to identify strengths and weaknesses for individual pupils and, as a result, lead to more accurate target setting.

78. Since the previous inspection very good developments have taken place in the subject, including the rewriting of the policy and successful implementation of National Literacy Strategy, which now provides a good structure. New initiatives are raising standards, particularly at Key Stage 2, but this is not yet fast enough in Key Stage 1.

## **MATHEMATICS**

79. The 2000 national test results for 11-year-olds show that the proportion of pupils attaining national standards (Level 4) is similar to the proportion who do so nationally. In addition, the proportion who attain the higher levels is also similar to the national proportions. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when pupils' standards were below national standards overall. When this school's results are compared with those of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, they are well above average. Over the last three years pupils' standards in mathematics have risen considerably. The main reasons for this are the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, a major increase in the quality of teaching of the subject and the introduction and use of good quality assessment procedures. Inspection evidence indicates that the standards of the current Year 6 are below national standards. This is explained by the fact that in the present Year 6 cohort half the pupils have special educational needs, a significantly higher proportion than in previous years. Also a quarter of pupils have had their progress disrupted at some point in time, in that they have moved to this school from another primary school in the last six years. As a result, these two factors are likely to have a significant impact on the school's results this year.

80. The results in the national tests for seven-year-olds in the Year 2000 show that the proportion of pupils who attain national standards is similar to national proportions but that the proportion who exceed the national standard is below the national figure. This is a similar picture to the findings of the previous inspection. When this school's results are compared with those of schools with pupils from similar backgrounds they are well above average. An analysis of trends over the last three years show that pupils' standards have risen considerably. The main reasons for this rise in standards are the same as the reasons for the rise in 11-year-olds' standards mentioned earlier. Inspection findings show that pupils' standards are similar to those of last year, although more pupils are attaining the above average standard than did so in 2000.

81. As a result of the structure provided by the National Numeracy Strategy, the good quality of teaching and the successful use of good quality assessment procedures, pupils make good progress in both key stages. This good progress applies to all pupils including those with special educational needs as well as those who have English as an additional language. This particularly applies to the present Year 6 pupils who, although their overall standards are below national standards, have nevertheless made good progress given their prior attainment levels.

82. The result of the good progress made in pupils' learning in Key Stage 1 is that by the age of seven most pupils' understand place value in numbers up to 100

and mentally recall addition and subtraction facts to 10 and, for many pupils, up to 20. They can identify and use simple fractions. Many recognise and name two-dimensional shapes but their knowledge of three-dimensional shapes is more limited. Furthermore, approximately a third of the pupils have a secure knowledge of place value in hundreds, tens and units. Their mental recall of the five and ten times tables is good. They use an increasingly wide vocabulary of mathematical terms in the correct context.

83. Similarly, the good progress made in Key Stage 2 means that by the age of 11, many pupils are competent with multiplication and division and have an understanding of place value to a million. They are familiar with the names of various angles and are able to convert vulgar fractions into decimals and percentages. They calculate areas of irregular shapes and are confident in the multiplication of decimals, the use of approximation and of co-ordinates. They are well able to construct and interpret simple line graphs. Discussions with pupils at the end of both key stages show that their knowledge and understanding of the number element of mathematics is particularly well developed.

84. Although many pupils show a basic understanding of mathematical concepts and accuracy of calculation at or, in a few pupils' cases, above the expected level, a significant number are unlikely to demonstrate this when completing National Curriculum tests. This is because their pace of working is often too slow when working independently. Furthermore, they give insufficient attention to checking their accuracy of recording unless reminded by their teacher.

85. The overall quality of teaching is good in both key stages. When good and very good teaching occurs, lessons start at a brisk pace, usually with some form of mental arithmetic. This is quickly followed by work that is appropriately matched to pupils' prior attainment levels. This was seen in a very good Year 2 lesson where the opening mental arithmetic session required pupils to order whole numbers to 100 and position them on a number line and hundred square. Pupils had to cover certain numbers on a number square, write the numbers down on their white boards and then position selected missing numbers on a number line. The pupils really enjoyed this activity and were most keen to answer the teacher's questions as well as obtain the correct answers. This was quickly followed by the main activity involving the collection of data. Pupils were taught how to construct a tally chart of the classes 'Favourite Pets'. The information collected as a whole class was then transferred into a block graph. Pupils were then divided into three groups, based on their prior attainment levels, in order to carry out a similar data collection activity. The work set was appropriate to the pupils' different ability levels and the teacher's good organisation, class control and high expectations with regard to work and the rate of working, ensured that all pupils made very good progress in their learning during the course of the lesson.

86. Good teaching also has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and hence the amount of learning that takes place. The above lesson shows how well-motivated pupils, with appropriate work, persevere, work hard and co-operate well together in group work. Pupils throughout the school enjoy the subject and are most keen to learn. They take care of the resources available to help them and are most willing to

share and take turns when using them. In a small minority of lessons, some pupils do not work hard or are not as well motivated. On occasions the teacher's over-long introduction, particularly in the main teaching activity, means that this small group become bored and sometimes disruptive. As a result, less progress in pupils' learning takes place.

87. The school has successfully adopted strategies associated with the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers explain things well and give clear instructions. They manage their pupils well, encouraging them to ask questions and to share their ideas in discussions. They use praise effectively to encourage positive attitudes and work habits. They encourage pupils to explain their mathematical thinking. In most cases, they use ends of sessions well to consolidate and assess pupils' learning, although the school rightly recognises that more work needs to be done in this area. Some teachers generally use assessment, both formal and informal, effectively but this is not always the case. Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly and make helpful and encouraging comments in pupils' books. This contributes to pupils' learning. When marking is unsatisfactory some work is marked with little more than a tick and, as a result, standards of presentation fall. Teachers keep satisfactory records in their monitoring of pupils' progress.

88. The co-ordinator has a commitment to the raising of standards of pupils of all prior attainment levels. She monitors aspects of the subject, including teachers' planning, pupils' completed work and a limited amount of classroom teaching. She scrutinises assessment test results and uses the results of her analysis to build a view of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. Good support is provided to teachers and, where appropriate, suggestions are made for improvement. Learning resources are satisfactory and teachers use them effectively. Good assessment procedures are in place with regular testing of pupils to inform teachers of their progress.

89. The school continues to make good progress in the development of the subject. The National Numeracy Strategy is now in place, pupils' standards at the end of both key stages have risen and the quality of teaching has improved overall. In addition, all the requirements of the National curriculum are being met.

## **SCIENCE**

90. The 2000 national test results for 11-year-olds show that the proportion of pupils attaining national standards (Level 4) is above the proportion who do so nationally. In addition, the proportion attaining the higher Level 5 is also above the national proportion. Teacher assessments of last year's seven-year-olds show that similar proportions attain the national average (Level 2) as do so elsewhere in the country but that a lower proportion attain the higher Level 3 than do so nationally.

91. Overall, attainment in science has improved since the last inspection. This continues the trend of the past four years of a steady rise in attainment. Scrutiny of previous work and current inspection evidence shows that attainment by the time pupils leave the school is in line with the national average. Similar evidence shows

that attainment by the age of seven is again in line with the national average. These are both improvements from the last inspection. Inspection evidence also shows however, that the school has not yet successfully addressed the issue of low attainment in investigation skills for higher-attaining pupils. Teaching in Key Stage 1 classes is more focused on ways of recording observations rather than on taking part in investigations. The teaching of investigation skills in science in the Key Stage 2 classes is better and is having a positive impact on raising standards by the age of 11. The planning of different tasks for different groups of pupils, especially the higher-attaining groups, is needed to address this issue. This remains an area of development for the school. The raising of standards has also been helped by more focused planning and teaching, which comes from the new scheme of work being adopted by the school. In addition, the monitoring of teaching and planning by the subject co-ordinator over the past year has helped to give a clearer idea of how well pupils are progressing as they move through the school.

92. All pupils by the age of seven, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, have made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of materials and forces. They know that the most common forces are pushes and pulls and can identify them in their everyday life. The higher-attaining pupils can sort materials into whether they are transparent or not, while average and lower attaining pupils use properties such as hard or soft. Year 1 pupils have made their own 'Seed Diary' about what seeds need for growth. In Year 2, pupils were observed testing to find out the warmest place in the classroom by melting ice cubes. Pupils are able to sort out materials as to whether they are natural or man-made, and most can identify and name correctly the main external parts of plants.

93. This building of a body of scientific knowledge continues in Key Stage 2 where older pupils can distinguish between solids, liquids and gases and have extended their knowledge of electricity and magnetism. Year 3 pupils were seen investigating the habitats of different animals such as wood lice. Their recording was well matched to the different prior attainment levels of the different groups in the class and involved recording data in tables as well as drawing what they had observed. This enabled all groups of pupils to contribute to the class discussion about what they had found out. Similarly in a Year 5 lesson investigating the best shape to travel through water, pupils were able to make their own decisions about the shape and then test their predictions. This lesson was particularly successful in developing pupils' investigative skills because the teaching was well planned, activities were well resourced and the activities were well organised to give pupils responsibility for planning what they wanted to do. Scrutiny of previous work in other Key Stage 2 classes shows that pupils are able to use keys to identify minibeasts, a topic helped considerably by the development of a conservation area in the school grounds with the help of parents and pupils. During their time in Key Stage 2 all pupils, including those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make good progress in their learning.

94. Throughout both stages, pupils with special educational needs in particular are fully involved in science activities. They receive good support from teachers and support staff. There is generally a good match between the work they are asked to

do and their previous learning, so that they are able to make good progress in most lessons.

95. During the inspection no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Three-quarters of the lessons seen had good teaching. This is an improvement from the last inspection. The majority of pupils are clear about what they have to do because teachers give good, detailed explanations. Many lessons are conducted at a good pace through the use of questioning by teachers and the setting of time limits for work completion. All this helps pupils to stay focused on what they are doing and the majority work hard. Opportunities for co-operation and collaboration through group working are well used to develop pupils' social skills.

96. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator who has monitored the teaching and learning in science over the past year. This has had a positive impact on helping to raise standards. The current focus for the subject in this years' school development plan is to improve the provision of resources. At present resources are adequate but are being well used to improve teaching and learning. Good use of a nationally approved scheme of work and other teacher resources has improved planning. The school is aware that its next task is to develop better assessment procedures so that it has a much clearer idea of what pupils can do, and what they need to do next in order to improve.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

97. It was not possible to observe lessons in art and design due to time-tabling arrangements. However, from all the available evidence including planning and displays of work the standards found at the previous inspection have been maintained. At the age of 7 and 11 pupils' attainment is in line with nationally expected levels. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress, given their prior attainment, throughout both key stages. Skills are developed carefully and systematically. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to explore the work of a range of artists and crafts people. Pupils' skills in self-evaluation require more emphasis. The recently introduced sketchbooks are at an early stage of development and use of those as well as confidence to experiment with different techniques are still developing. Pupils show steady progress throughout the school in skills of observational drawing and portrait work but these need to be used more regularly as an art diary for sketching and design work. Pupils in Year 1 paint pictures of fables and create large models of robot dinosaurs. Paintings of the seasons show sound control of brush and colour. Pupils in Year 2 use natural materials to create pictures. They make good musical instruments using recycled material. They create interesting shape pictures focussing on line, shape and colour. Paintings of animals, following a visit to Kingswood, show improving skills and techniques.

98. Pupils build well on skills in painting in Key Stage 2, decorating burial masks as part of their topic work on Egyptians. In Years 4 and 5 good links are made to mathematics as pupils develop patterns based on symmetry. Pupils in Years 5 and 6

produce good quality work, enamelling key rings, having designed a range of boxes such as pill boxes and snuff boxes and following a visiting artist who demonstrated these skills and fired pupils' enthusiasm, resulting in work of a good standard. Skills, such as observational drawing of poppy seeds continue to develop steadily. Other experiences include wax resist to stained glass windows, a three dimensional model of the church and brass rubbings following a visit to the local church. In both key stages the use of computers to support work in art and design is limited.

99. Throughout the school skills are carefully taught and teaching is at least satisfactory and often good. Pupils enjoy art and design because their work is valued by teachers. This is evident in the very good quality of display about the school, enhancing the environment in which pupils work. Pupils are well motivated through the interesting tasks provided in many cases although the range of experiences are not wide, constrained by the limited range of resources. Where teachers have good subject knowledge this is reflected in the standard of work produced. Knowledge about artists and their work is a weakness. The subject co-ordinator recognises that assessment and its use to inform planning is an area of weakness. She is also right to highlight the monitoring of teaching and development of her role in this respect as a personal target for improvement. The introduction of the national guidance has provided a good framework and has been adapted to meet the specific needs of the school.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

100. A limited number of lessons were seen and these, along with evidence from talking to the co-ordinator, other teachers and pupils and a scrutiny of planning and previous work, shows that pupils' attainment levels are broadly in line with national expected levels at the end of both key stages. This is an improvement from the last inspection when attainment was below such levels.

101. Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching and the subject is taught in a more systematic manner across the school. The school has adopted a new scheme of work which addresses all the requirements of the programmes of study. There is better co-ordination of the subject and resources have been improved. These are all improvements that have had a positive impact on the raising of standards. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress throughout the school.

102. In Year 1 pupils make their own jam sandwich and were observed making a fresh fruit salad. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have experienced making moveable arms and legs for their own designs and Year 2 has a striking and colourful display of their work making 'Joseph's coat of many colours'. By the age of seven pupils have used a range of materials such as paper, card and cloth. This range is further expanded in Key Stage 2 where pupils design and make picture frames, moveable animals and birds on wheels and use their knowledge of electricity to make an alarm. In the two lessons seen in Key Stage 2, Year 5 were observed making moving mechanisms for a storybook, and Year 6 pupils were

discussing the preparation of making the ideal biscuit. Pupils' work in Year 6 shows that they have experienced a range of skills in making enamelled key fobs after a visit to a local art centre, and designed and made their own pill boxes. By the age of eleven pupils have experienced a satisfactory range of design and making opportunities, made good progress and attained the nationally expected levels.

103. The quality of teaching in all lessons is good overall and never less than satisfactory. Teachers' planning has improved since the last inspection and it now addresses all the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers plan the design and making stages of the subject satisfactorily but there is less emphasis placed on pupils evaluating how to improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, receive good support in class, which enables them to make good progress. Less focus is given, however, to the needs of higher-attaining pupils who would benefit from more opportunities to demonstrate their abilities.

104. The subject is led satisfactorily by the co-ordinator. The new scheme of work is proving to be effective in raising standards as well as the overall level of teaching. The subject is taught on a two-year programme of topics but the timing is left to the discretion of individual teachers, which does not always enable pupils to develop their knowledge and skills in an evenly paced manner. At present there is no assessment of how well pupils are learning or the levels of skills they are achieving. The school is aware of the need to develop this aspect of the co-ordinator's role as well as the aspect of monitoring the standards of pupils' work and the quality of teaching they receive. Present resources are barely adequate but the new funds allocated to the subject should help to address this.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

105. By the age of seven most pupils have attainment levels that are below those expected of seven-year-olds nationally. The progress they make in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory given their prior attainment levels. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 was unsatisfactory. The satisfactory progress made in Key Stage 1 is characterised by the systematic development of pupils' geographical skills and of their knowledge and understanding of the subject. In Year 1 early mapping skills are taught through the journey taken from home to school and the location of various features in the playground. Differences between hot and cold climates are studied and good links with numeracy are made through the use of traffic surveys and simple graphs to show the different methods pupils have of getting to school. This work is built on in Year 2 so that their studies broaden out from the local area. How to get to various seaside locations in Britain are researched and pupils contrast life in Bilston with that on the Isle of Struay, an imaginary Scottish Island. This satisfactory progress means that by the age of seven, pupils have a knowledge and understanding of their local area and are able to ask and answer questions about a limited number of different environments.

106. Pupils' levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 are below those expected

of 11-year-olds nationally largely as a result of pupils' below average literacy skills. The higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6 is the major factor contributing to below average levels of attainment. As a result, whilst most pupils have a knowledge and understanding of different places and environments in the world, their low level literacy skills hamper the levels pupils attain in the subject. However, given their prior attainment levels the progress made by all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, as well as those who have English as an additional language is satisfactory. Again, as in Key Stage 1, this is an improvement since the previous inspection when pupils' progress was considered to be unsatisfactory. The satisfactory progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2 is characterised by the successful development of their geographical skills and understanding of the subject. Years 3 and 4 make in-depth studies of climate, both local and international, by studying the weather in areas such as grasslands, deserts and polar regions. Mapping skills are developed through studying plans of the school and local journeys. This is built on in Year 5 through the comparative study of Chembakolli, comparing the location and life style of this Indian Village with that of their own. Detailed river studies such as that of the Mississippi and Nile, together with a study of environmental issues further raise pupils' geographical awareness and understanding. Such satisfactory progress throughout the key stage means that by the age of 11 most pupils can describe and contrast both the physical and human features of different localities and understand how people try to improve or sustain their environment.

107. Pupils have satisfactory attitudes to learning in geography. Most enjoy the subject, share resources and work hard. However, on some occasions, particularly if they are insufficiently well motivated by the work set a small minority can easily become bored and disruptive. Whilst such incidents are infrequent they, nevertheless, have a detrimental effect on the amount of progress that some groups of pupils make.

108. The quality of teaching in both key stages is satisfactory and this has a direct effect on the amount of progress pupils make. Lessons are well planned with appropriate objectives that are shared with pupils. Tasks set are generally appropriate but not always well matched to pupils' prior attainment levels. Consequently, some pupils, usually higher-attaining pupils, are insufficiently challenged by the work and do not work at a significantly fast pace. Resources, which are adequate overall, are often well used, as was seen in a good Year 6 lesson, where by watching a video of life on the River Mississippi, pupils were well able to understand why flooding controls were essential and what an important part river management played in the lives of people in cities found along the river.

109. Whilst the school has a good policy (reviewed in October 2000) and follows national guidelines as its scheme of work, a review of the balance of the whole curriculum is necessary. At present, insufficient time is allocated to the teaching of geography and, as a result, not all aspects of the subject are covered in sufficient depth. This has a detrimental effect on the progress pupils are able to make and ultimately on the standards they attain. Similarly the lack of satisfactory assessment,

marking and recording systems means that the work planned is not always soundly based on what pupils already know and can do.

110. The subject is managed by an able co-ordinator who has a good understanding of the needs of the subject and pupils. Her role now needs to be further clarified and extended to enable her to monitor more adequately the work pupils do and the standards that they attain. In addition, more use could be made of visits to geographical sites to develop further pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject.

## **HISTORY**

111. Pupils' levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 are below those expected of seven-year-olds nationally. However, given their low attainment levels at the beginning of the key stage, pupils make satisfactory progress in the two years they spend in Key Stage 1. This is an improvement of the previous inspection when pupils' progress was found to be unsatisfactory. During Key Stage 1, pupils in Year 1 learn the historical concepts of similarity and difference as well as that of change over time. This was seen in the work pupils had completed on old and new houses and the differences between old and new toys. They looked at the characteristics of old and new teddy bears and with help from their teacher had constructed a time line to show the developments in houses through the ages. This notion of chronological sequencing is built on in Year 2 where pupils had constructed a train time-line from the early days of the 'Rocket', through 'Mallard' to the present 'electric' trains. Famous events in history such as the 'Great Fire of London' are studied and studies are also made in comparing holidays by the seaside 100 years ago with holidays today. This satisfactory progress means that by the age of seven most pupils have an awareness of the differences in certain areas between the past and the present and can relate episodes from stories of the past.

112. By the age of 11, pupils' levels of attainment are below those expected nationally of eleven-year-olds. This is largely due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6. As a result, whilst most pupils can talk satisfactorily about events from the past and suggest reason for them, their low level of literacy skills hamper the levels pupils attain in the subject. The progress made by all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language, is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. As in Key Stage 1, this is an improvement on the previous inspection when pupils' progress was found to be unsatisfactory.

113. The satisfactory progress over the key stage is characterised by the way in which skills, knowledge and understanding of history are developed during the four years. In Year 3, pupils study the Ancient Egyptians and their method of writing, using hieroglyphs. During Year 4 the use of evidence is built upon in their study of the Tudors, where pupils, after studying evidence, had to give their considered views of Henry VIII. Chronological sequencing is developed through a study of Henry VIII's

wives. Evidence and chronological sequencing is again developed in Year 5 through their studies of Ancient Greece. Good use of evidence is made in Year 6, where pupils use contemporary newspaper accounts and maps to discuss the 1832 cholera epidemic in Bilston. Such satisfactory progress throughout the key stage means that by the age of 11, pupils recognise that the past can be divided into periods of time, they realise that they can use information sources to answer questions about the past and can begin to explain and suggest the consequences of the main events and changes over a period of time.

114. Within individual lessons pupils' progress is more variable ranging from satisfactory to good. Where progress is good it is largely due to the good teaching pupils receive, although overall, teaching is satisfactory. This was particularly noticeable in a very good Year 3 lesson. The opening session reminded pupils of the previous lesson when they had learnt about how and why the ancient Egyptians had settled alongside the River Nile. The good questioning quickly motivated pupils who were enthusiastic and keen to answer the questions. Examples of papyrus were shown to pupils in order to reinforce their knowledge of the importance of the River Nile. Pupils were then required to work in pairs on the advantages and disadvantages of living near the river. This challenged many pupils who, as a result of the teacher's insistence on high standards and good pace to the lesson, quickly worked out that the advantages of living near the Nile easily outweighed the disadvantages. The plenary session at the end of the lesson consolidated pupils' learning and showed clearly how much good progress they had made in their learning during the course of the lesson.

115. Where teaching is not so good, pupils become less well motivated, are not so eager to work at such a good pace and are not challenged by the work. On these occasions the progress they make in their learning, though not unsatisfactory, is not as good as when the teaching is good.

116. The quality of teaching also has a noticeable effect on pupils' attitudes to the subject. Where teaching is good, they respond well, are keen to learn and thoroughly enjoy the subject. This is less so when teaching is satisfactory. In addition, when there are overlong introductions to the lesson, some older pupils in particular, rapidly become bored and, on occasions, disruptive.

117. The school follows a nationally published scheme of work for the subject and a good policy document was amended in October 2000. However, a review of the balance of the whole curriculum is necessary as, at present, insufficient time is allocated to the teaching of the subject. This is an additional reason why pupils' levels of attainment are below nationally expected levels at the end of both key stages. The subject is managed by an able co-ordinator who has recently taken over responsibility for the subject. She has a good understanding of the needs of both the subject and pupils. A review of her role is necessary to enable her to monitor more closely the work pupils are producing and the standards they are attaining. In addition, systems for the assessing, marking and recording of pupils' progress need to be developed as, at present, they are unsatisfactory. The school makes satisfactory use of visits to historical sites, such as those to Boscobel House by Years

and 4, although more use could be made in order to support pupils' levels of understanding. Resources for history are inadequate particularly in respect of a school based collection of artefacts,

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

118. Pupils' attainment by the ages of seven and eleven is below nationally expected levels. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were found to be well below such levels. Teaching and learning in the subject is now on a much more secure basis through greatly improved resources, better planning, increased teacher confidence and competence and the direct teaching of skills. These are all good improvements since the last inspection. Much of this is due to the appointment last year of a new co-ordinator for the subject, who has worked hard to raise the profile of the subject across the school. The school is now in a much more secure position to continue this improvement in standards.

119. The majority of pupils are now making good progress in developing their ICT skills due to good, direct teaching. By the age of seven, pupils use the computer with confidence and are able to record data they have collected in the form of pictograms. They can use an art package to draw freehand, using the mouse, and are able to type simple sentences using specific keys on the keyboard. A good lesson was seen in Year 1, where the knowledge of how a sequence of commands must be sorted into the correct order, was also used to develop literacy skills. The lesson seen in Year 2 was successful in developing pupils' mouse skills. Pupils could open a program, access different menus and cut and paste pictures to form a pictograph of their favourite pets. In this lesson, good use was made of their current work in mathematics.

120. The focus on teaching direct skills is continued in Key Stage 2. Year 3 pupils were observed developing their own branching database to identify different animals. This work on data handling was extended in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were introduced to a higher level of skills using 'Excel', to plot data before recording it in graphical form. Pupils' previous work shows that word processing skills are satisfactorily developed in Years 3, 4 and 5 where higher-attaining pupils can combine text and pictures. Year 6 pupils have produced some striking poems using the computer and older pupils have also made use of the internet for research into their topics on rivers, Ancient Egypt and the Greeks. However, much of this work lacks a specific purpose and some of the information is not at an appropriate level.

121. In all lessons the quality of teaching is good. Teachers' confidence in their own knowledge of the programs they are using is good. This is a major improvement from the last inspection. They are good at giving detailed instructions that enable all groups of pupils to be clear about what is expected of them, and then making well-planned interventions to support their pupils when it is necessary. Pupils respond well to this and show confidence in their work as well as pride in their achievements. Whole class sessions and group work are well managed. This enables all groups of pupils to make good progress. When working in pairs on the computers, pupils co-operate and take turns fairly.

122. The trial of a new scheme of work based on nationally approved guidelines has helped the school to address the requirements of the national curriculum in a more systematic manner. Well organised and effective training of staff has also had an impact on the raising of standards. However, the school is well aware of what still needs to be done. More training is planned, better procedures for assessing the skills of pupils are planned and the co-ordinator needs to develop her role in monitoring the teaching and learning in the subject in a more rigorous and systematic way. Whilst some use is made of ICT to support learning in other areas of the curriculum, this is not yet an established feature of the work of the school.

## **MUSIC**

123. The satisfactory standards identified in the previous inspection report have been maintained. The levels pupils attain in music are in line with those expected nationally at the end of both key stages. There remain, however, variations in composing skills, particularly at Key Stage 2. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 progress is satisfactory overall. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make similar progress to others in their class. The school has introduced the national guidance as a basis of a scheme of work. This is providing a structured framework for music. All classes have a weekly music lesson with a visiting music specialist who is making a positive contribution to raising standards. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall in both key stages with good teaching seen in Key Stage 1. It is strongest in Year 2 because the teacher has good subject expertise. She makes learning fun and pupils are highly motivated to learn as a result. Most pupils enjoy music lessons, listening carefully and following instructions. They are able to clap and tap rhythms and suggest appropriate weather words for different weather

conditions. Simple songs such as 'I hear thunder' are sung in reasonable tune but the pace of lessons are sometimes pedestrian and this, together with an overlong introduction by the teacher reduces the time available for performance and limits opportunities for listening and appraising. In Year 2 pupils develop satisfactory skills in composition and acquire an increasing musical vocabulary. They show good recall of the symbols used for composition and know how to play a limited range of untuned percussion instruments. There are missed opportunities in some lessons to ensure pupils hold instruments correctly and know the name of the instruments they play. Pupils control the instruments well in most cases, playing softly, loudly, fast and slow in response to symbols.

124. In both key stages pupils work well in groups to create simple compositions and explain to the class what their composition is about. A good explanation was provided by one boy with English as an additional language who led his group with confidence. Pupils enjoy performing for others. Pupils in both key stages sing with tremendous enthusiasm. The limited time available for the subject limits the opportunities for listening to and appraising music particularly in Key Stage 1. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to select resources for themselves because the adults make these choices. Resources are barely adequate and do not enhance the curriculum sufficiently.

125. In Key Stage 2 pupils build steadily on skills already acquired, particularly singing. Opportunities to develop skills in composing, however, are below what is expected. Pupils in Year 6, for example, listen to a range of music and discuss pictures to form an impression of moods. They practice using percussion instruments to describe images and different moods. The groups are given good support by the teacher and music specialist so helping them to refine their skills which are currently below the level expected. This is because skills in composition have not been developed systematically until the recent appointment of the co-ordinator. Most pupils work with enthusiasm and enjoyment. As in Key Stage 1, limited time prevents pupils from discussing and evaluating their performance. Recent developments include a guitar club and a school choir. Both are fairly new initiatives. There has been a very good response from pupils to join the choir, from boys in Year 6 in particular. They sing tunefully and enthusiastically under the guidance of the co-ordinator, who is providing good direction for the subject in her endeavour to raise standards. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of music in the school. The limited time given to music, the lack of assessment opportunities and insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning need to be addressed.

126. The choir also have opportunities to perform for the senior citizens and for fundraising events at the railway station and in church. This contributes positively to pupils' personal development. Assemblies make a good contribution to music, with opportunities for quiet listening and joyful singing. The limited resources, in particular multicultural instruments and teachers' resource material, have an adverse effect on pupils' learning.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

127. Standards found at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. Pupils' attainment by the ages of 7 and 11 is in line with the nationally expected levels. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress throughout the school given their prior attainment on entry to school. They achieve well in swimming with most pupils achieving at least the minimum 25 metres by the time they leave the school. During the inspection however, only games teaching was able to be observed.

128. In Key Stage 1, pupils demonstrate good skills in throwing and catching. All pupils are fully involved in lessons. Skills develop well to incorporate the basic skills in rounders. They particularly develop skills in working within a team, when playing small-sided games.

129. Pupils in Year 3 build on the skills of passing and kicking a football. They work together in pairs and learn to pass using the correct part of the foot, many reaching the expected level for their age. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 consolidate earlier skills in fielding and catching a ball, doing so with the expected level of skill. A good proportion demonstrate competence in batting and fielding. Most, though not all, are able to sustain energetic activity. The high proportion of special educational needs pupils in Year 6 enjoy games and make good progress in the acquisition of skills.

130. Teaching and learning is often good because teachers have good subject knowledge and share what they want pupils to learn at the beginning of a lesson so that pupils are clear about what is expected. The range of games played includes football, rounders, kwikcricket and tennis. Lessons are well structured usually, to enable pupils to warm-up satisfactorily. They have a sound understanding of the impact of exercise on their body in many cases. Usually lessons are conducted at a brisk pace so that time is maximised. This is not the case for the oldest pupils some of whom take too long to settle. Teachers provide help and support to children, emphasising the need for safety well. Occasionally, a minority do not work with good physical and creative effort. This is because their attitudes to learning are not always particularly positive and they do not give their full attention to the teacher or take the activities seriously. Most pupils, however, enjoy games and work hard. Skills in self evaluation are not well developed. Adults provide good role models for pupils, changing appropriately for lessons and demonstrating skills to be acquired.

131. A weakness is the limited time given to the subject, making it difficult to cover the subject in sufficient depth. The new national guidelines have been introduced to provide a framework for the curriculum. This has yet to be adapted to the needs of the school. The school benefits from a community programme set up with Wolverhampton Wanderers Football Club to develop skills in football. Other extra-curricular activities include football, cricket, athletics, cross-country running. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership. He does not have the opportunity for monitoring teaching. This together with a lack of assessment opportunities prevents standards from improving further.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

132. In the last inspection attainment was judged to be in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for Wolverhampton. Pupils were making satisfactory progress. Since then the school has maintained these standards.

133. Only one lesson was seen during the course of the inspection. However, this along with other judgements, based on the scrutiny of previous work and teachers' planning, talking to the co-ordinator, other teachers and pupils, mean that secure judgements are possible. From this evidence it is possible to see the benefit of the new scheme of work based on the locally agreed syllabus. This is having a positive impact on the teaching and learning of the subject across the school, which is now on a much more secure footing. Another positive impact has come through the new co-ordinator who has worked hard to raise the profile of the subject. As a result

pupils' progress is satisfactorily secured and appropriate standards have been maintained.

134. By the age of seven most pupils have begun to develop their understanding of the importance of their community and their place within it. They can express their feelings about others, for example, in the way pupils in Year 2 are given opportunities to lead the class prayer at the end of each day. They were able to express their kind thoughts for their friends who were ill and in hoping that they were feeling better. Scrutiny of their previous work and the current bright, colourful displays show that they have looked at the lives of special people such as Buddha and Jesus, and heard the stories of Noah and Daniel in the lion's den. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 study the beliefs of other faiths, such as Islam. They look at the roles of the different types of religious leaders such as that of the vicar, and study festivals such as Easter, Ramadan and Diwali. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have compared Christian and Hindu weddings. There are a number of very attractive displays around school, which highlight these aspects of the pupils' work. Year 6 visited St. Peter's Church for a range of activities, including bell ringing, tapestry weaving and making puppets. Their display includes a large-scale model of the church. As a result of this satisfactory development of their skills and knowledge in the subject, appropriate levels are attained by the age of 11.

135. The quality of teaching in the lesson seen was satisfactory and other evidence from previous work would suggest that this is a true reflection of the teaching of the subject across the school. Teachers are well supported by the new scheme of work and this is helping to develop planning so that it is having a positive impact on the standards of the majority of pupils. Assemblies make a positive contribution to the development of pupils' attitudes and beliefs through well-chosen songs and stories.

136. The co-ordinator has only been in post for two terms but her enthusiasm and drive has helped to raise the profile of the subject across the school. She provides effective leadership, in terms of support for colleagues, but has insufficient time to monitor the teaching and learning of the subject. In addition, systems to assess and record pupils' progress in the subject are unsatisfactory. Resources are adequate but should benefit from the recent funding allocated so that they might better match the range of topics of the new scheme of work and so help to entrance pupils' learning even further.