

INSPECTION REPORT

WREN'S NEST PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dudley

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103823

Headteacher: Mrs Y J Pearson

Reporting inspector: Mr B Tyrer
23101

Dates of inspection: 1st – 4th October 2001

Inspection number: 196587

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address:	Foxglove Road Wren's Nest Estate Dudley West Midlands
Postcode:	DY1 3NQ
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Lacey
Date of previous inspection:	November 1999

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23101	Mr B Tyrer	Registered inspector	Religious education Equal opportunities English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught?
9736	Mr J Brasier	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?
20877	Mr D Pink	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30243	Mrs A Heakin	Team Inspector	English Foundation stage Special educational needs	
26514	Mrs A Tapsfield	Team Inspector	Art and design Design & Technology	How well is the school led and managed?
31166	Mr P Garner	Team inspector	Science Information & communication technology Music Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the Castle and Priory ward of Dudley and belongs to the Dudley Education Action Zone. It has a 60 place part time nursery. There are 354 pupils on roll of whom 188 are girls and 196 are boys. The school is bigger than average. About 90 per cent of pupils are white. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs (24 per cent) is above the national average. Six pupils have statements of special educational need. This is in line with the national average. Seven out of thirty four pupils at the higher stages of the special needs register joined the school within the last twelve months. The proportion of pupils for whom English is a second language is a bit higher than average but none are at the early stage of language acquisition. The attainment of children on entry to the nursery is well below what might be expected nationally.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a school with a good level of effectiveness. Despite being low, standards are rising. The quality of teaching is good. The leadership and management of the school are very good. Taking standards, costs and quality of education provided, the school is providing satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Attitudes are very good and behaviour is good.
- Teaching is good.
- The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The school takes good care of its pupils.
- Leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are very good and the governing body show good levels of effectiveness.

What could be improved

- Standards in the core subjects.
- Attendance.
- The use of information and communication technology across the curriculum.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made a good improvement since the time of its last inspection in November 1999. At that time it was deemed to have serious weaknesses in standards and teaching. These serious weaknesses no longer exist and the quality of teaching is now a strength of the school. The school has made good progress, in raising standards, though this needs to continue. The quality of teaching has improved markedly. Satisfactory progress has been made in developing the role of the co-ordinators and the role of the governing body has been much strengthened.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E*	E*	E*	E*
mathematics	E*	E*	E*	E
science	E*	E*	E*	E

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

This table shows that the attainment of pupils in national tests in 2000 in English, mathematics and science was very low (in the bottom five per cent for all schools). When compared with schools having a similar number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals the performance in English was very low in English and was well below in mathematics and science. Performance in these subjects over recent time has also been very low. When looked at against the national rising trend the school is improving at a broadly similar rate. Results of tests for pupils aged 11 in 2001, for which there is no comparative data, show improvements in English, similar results in mathematics and a good improvement in science. The results of national tests for pupils aged seven in 2000 were well below average in reading and writing and were very low for mathematics. This performance was above average when compared with similar schools in reading and writing but was well below in mathematics. The improvement in all three subjects over time is far better than that seen nationally.

Inspection shows that pupils in the Foundation Stage are now achieving well and those in the other phases are achieving satisfactorily. Standards for pupils in English, and mathematics have improved so that they are now below average at the end of Key Stage 1 with science at the expected level. Attainment of pupils aged 11 is now below average in English and science and well below average in mathematics. The school has set reasonable and attainable targets based on good data. Children enter the nursery with levels of attainment that are well below what might be expected nationally. By the end of the Foundation stage these children are achieving nationally expected levels.

Attainment in the rest of the curriculum subjects shows that standards are as expected for pupils aged seven but are below expectation at age eleven. The exceptions are in music and religious education where standards for the older pupils are average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils like school and work well in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. This has been a major improvement. Pupils play and work well together.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are eager to take on responsibility and they enjoy good relationships with the staff and each other.
Attendance	Poor. This is something that the school must continue to address.

The school has good procedures in place to monitor attendance and has adopted several good strategies for improving attendance but this work is yet to show the desired results.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	good	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.

Teaching is good overall. The teaching of English and mathematics is good. The national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy have been successfully adopted and are contributing to raising standards. Basic skills are well taught in both subjects. Teachers plan work well for pupils of all abilities although there is the need to challenge the more able pupils in some subjects. All pupils including those with special needs are well provided for as are the small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Poor planning and inappropriate choice of task were seen in the two lessons that failed to meet the required standard. Pupils are now willing and active participants in their learning as a result of improvement to their behaviour and to the quality of teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory but there is a need to make greater use of information and communication technology in support of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Individual education plans are well prepared and all staff make a positive contribution to pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory and provision for moral and social is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. the school has good procedures for child protection and very good procedures for promoting good behaviour.

The school is well thought of by parents and parents report that they find the school staff approachable. There is a need for some parents to work more closely with the school in securing better levels of attendance for their children. The curriculum meets statutory requirement.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and key staff have worked most effectively in ensuring that the school no longer has serious weaknesses.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body make an effective contribution to the development of the school and are meeting their statutory duties.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has good systems for evaluation of its performance.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Staff and resources are well deployed and staff are well supported.

The particular strength of the school has been the ability and determination of the senior management team and the headteacher in particular to improving the school. There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum. The accommodation, now much improved, is very good. Resources are good. The school pays adequate regard to the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That their children like school. • That their children are making good progress. • That teaching is good. • That they can comfortably approach the school. • That the school expects their children to work hard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework. • The information they receive. • The range of out of school activities.

The inspection team agree with what the parents find pleasing about the school. It is felt that for the most part the amount of homework is satisfactory. The information provided to parents is satisfactory and the school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 The levels of attainment on entry to the nursery are well below those expected of this age group. Provision in the Foundation classes is good and children progress well. The curriculum is soundly based on the six areas of learning for children of this age. Appropriate emphasis is given to personal, social and emotional development, language and literacy and mathematical development. The consistently good teaching from the teachers and nursery nurses has a positive effect on children's learning and they make good progress.
- 2 The results of national tests for seven year olds in 2000 showed that:
 - Standards in reading and writing were well below the national average and for mathematics they were very low;
 - Standards for reading and writing were above those in schools where a similar proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals but were well below for mathematics;
 - Teacher assessment for science showed that the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 or above was well below the national average.
- 3 Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been lower than the national average over recent years but the rising trend in levels of attainment is better than that seen nationally and there was a particularly good improvement in these subjects between 1999 and 2000. The results of national tests for pupils aged 11 showed that:
 - Standards in English, mathematics and science were very low;
 - In comparison with similar schools standards were very low for English and well below average for mathematics and science;
 - Improvement based on prior attainment at age seven and in comparison with similar schools was well below average.
- 4 The pupils' performance over time at the end of Key Stage 2 for pupils aged 11 has also been lower than that seen nationally but the rising trend in all three subjects is broadly similar to that seen nationally.
- 5 Results of national tests in 2001 for pupils aged seven for which there is no national comparative data suggest that results were lower in reading, writing and mathematics. For pupils aged 11 taking national tests in the same year results in English appear to be slightly better. In mathematics they appear similar and for science there is a good improvement. Analysis of all these results shows that pupils are generally not reaching the higher levels (Level 3 for pupils aged 7 and Level 5 for pupils aged 11) in anything like average numbers.
- 6 Inspection shows that there has been an improvement since the last national tests for pupils aged seven where attainment in science is now in line with expectations and is below for English and mathematics. Attainment for pupils aged 11 has improved but remains below expectations in English and science and is well below for mathematics. These improvements are a consequence of the improvements that have been made over time in pupils' attitudes and behaviour and also in the improvement over time of the quality of teaching. The most obvious impacts are seen in the improving levels of attainment particularly for younger pupils. The steady rate of progress is also complicated by the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the irregular concentration and admission times of these pupils into different year groups. There has been a significant change to the staff over recent years but the staffing position may now be regarded as stable. The pupils do not suffer from

unfilled teaching posts nor does the school have to function for lengthy periods with temporary teachers. Low standards are no longer considered to be a serious weakness of the school. Whilst good progress has been made in raising standards the need to raise them further remains a key issue.

- 7 Pupils of differing abilities are generally well catered for with the observation that there is now a need to raise the attainment of the most able. Pupils who have special educational needs make very good progress in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 they make good progress. Arrangements for supporting pupils who have special educational needs are effective and the imaginative use of resources including staffing has resulted in very good progress for younger pupils who have special educational needs. In some instances this exceeds the rate of progress made by other pupils and reflects the commitment of the school in meeting pupils' individual educational needs. All pupils at Stage 2 and above on the special needs register have very good quality individual education plans that include their targets. The Pupil Support Co-ordinator takes the lead in devising the individual plans in conjunction with class teachers and support staff. These combined with early identification of pupils' special educational needs, good assessment, careful monitoring and consistently good teaching result in the overall good progress made by these pupils. Pupils for whom English is a second language were observed to be making progress at similar rates to the rest. No differences could be observed in the progress of boys and girls' and lessons showed that teachers were adept at providing equal opportunity for all their pupils.
- 8 Standards are below expectations in speaking and listening but there is evidence to show that confidence building is having an effect. The youngest pupils join in with shared reading when it comes to sentences that are repeated in the text. Pupils in Year 1 are eager to tell listeners all that they can remember from their lessons on Judaism and pupils in Year 2 are able to look and listen to a video and then discuss what they have seen either in pairs or in groups. Pupils in Year 6 show varying levels of ability and confidence when talking about biographies but are more confident when talking about fact rather than opinion. Standards are also below expectations in reading where most significantly it is the higher attaining pupils who are not achieving levels that might be expected. Few pupils are enthusiastic readers but there are systems in place to support the development of reading. Pupils aged seven are able to decode some words using their knowledge of phonics and they are also able to use other clues to meaning such as the evidence offered by pictures and illustrations. The most able read with fluency and expression but most are unable to suggest possible outcomes for the story they are reading. Older pupils in Year 6 are becoming familiar with a range of written material and are generally able to read with fluency although the fluency is not always matched with a good understanding of what has been read. Most are able to talk about how non fiction books work but few again show enthusiasm in reading for pleasure. Standards in writing are below expectations and improvements can be seen once again in pupils with lower levels of attainment. Most can write accurate simple sentences with reasonable spelling. Those aged seven are writing for different purposes so that they can write notes and letters. The most able are producing stories that are reasonably structured and are showing an increasing tendency to use imaginative vocabulary. Writing for pupils aged eleven includes descriptions, reports and instructions. There is more confidence with vocabulary aided by the use of word books and the thesaurus. Redrafting is now part of the writing process. Writing is generally neat and clear and most older pupils are now using a joined script.
- 9 Standards in mathematics are below expectations for pupils at age seven and well below at eleven. Pupils aged seven are showing developing confidence in handling number and in tackling written problems, more so than those aged eleven. Number skills are not yet secure for the oldest pupils and this is most obvious in mental maths sessions. There are some opportunities for pupils to use mathematics across the curriculum so that we see pupils in

Year 2 measuring in science lessons for example and then drawing graphs. The attainment of pupils aged seven in science is in line with expectations and this represents a good improvement. These pupils are able to make detailed observations and enjoy practical experiments to observe the effectiveness of their senses. The attainment of pupils aged eleven is below expectations. Pupils know about and apply the rule of fair testing in their experiments and are able to design investigations about the evaporation of water. They are using scientific vocabulary in writing although they are less able to use it when talking about their work.

- 10 Attainment in the rest of the curriculum subjects shows that standards are as expected for pupils aged seven but are below expectation at age eleven. The exceptions are in music and religious education where standards for the older pupils are average.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 11 Attitudes and relationships are very good, and behaviour is good. There has been a significant improvement compared with the last inspection. These aspects lay the foundation for future learning improvements at Wren's Nest.
- 12 Pupils very much enjoy school. They are enthusiastic in lessons and speak highly of their teachers and other adults in the school. They are welcoming to visitors and enjoy talking to them. Once in class they mainly get down to work well and show a genuine interest in their work. This was particularly evident in a geography lesson about the fruits and vegetables found in Africa, where the samples shown evoked great interest and wonder. These positive attitudes are due to the very good relationships between teachers, nursery nurses and the pupils, to the enthusiasm of teachers and their very good classroom management.
- 13 Behaviour is good overall. It is very good in most classes, but it has to be well managed, and where those skills are less well developed it is very occasionally unsatisfactory and sometimes just satisfactory. On the playground, behaviour is generally good with occasional lapses. The good or very good behaviour in assemblies is supported by very close supervision from the teachers in attendance. Around the school behaviour is good and at lunchtime in the dining hall the behaviour is good, though somewhat noisy. School property is treated well and pupils are appreciative of the environmental improvements in recent years. There were six temporary exclusions in the past year. The record of racial incidents and bullying is meticulously maintained and shows that while such incidents occur they are rare and dealt with appropriately.
- 14 Relationships are very good. Teachers and nursery nurses know their children well and enjoy working with them. Pupils are confident in speaking to members of staff about problems. Pupils help each other and give support. For instance in a class of lower ability pupils, great support and respect was shown for the weakest pupil in the class as she read out her poem. In another class where relationships are still developing, the teacher gave the pupils the option of working together or alone. In fact most opted to do it in pairs, and they did it with success, which was a great step forward for them.
- 15 Personal development is satisfactory, but improving. Because of the need to be vigilant to maintain good behaviour, opportunities for pupils to work without supervision are limited. Pupils are given positions of responsibility. Prefects help with the organisation and supervision of playtimes, handle snack sales and assist in assemblies.

- 16 Attendance is poor, and this is a slight deterioration since the last inspection. It has declined from 91.8 per cent in 1996 to 90.8 per cent in 2000/1. This is some 4 per cent below the average for primary schools. Unauthorised absence is high. There is no clear explanation for this continuing problem, although the local authority, in carrying out 'truancy sweeps', has discovered a tendency for parents to take children shopping during school time. The school day starts on time and there is good timekeeping through out the day. The new registration system is efficient.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 17 At the time of the last inspection the quality of teaching was regarded as a serious weakness. Inspection shows that this is no longer the case and that teaching is now one of the many strengths that the school possesses.
- 18 The quality of teaching is good overall. Of the 78 lessons seen one was poor and one was unsatisfactory but of the remainder 27 per cent were satisfactory, 51 per cent were good and 18 per cent were very good. One lesson was excellent. This represents a very good improvement since the time of the last inspection and is attributable to the very good leadership and management of the school and the determination and commitment of all staff. The proportion of good and better teaching has improved and the level of unsatisfactory teaching has dropped to almost nil. The school has mechanisms in place and is already addressing the unsatisfactory elements of teaching that were observed through monitoring and in-class support. Some very good teaching was observed in all phases. The best teaching was seen in the Foundation Stage where it is always good or better – three lessons out of the ten observed were very good and one was excellent. Teaching in Key Stage 1 has a high proportion of good and very good teaching and is always satisfactory or better. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is still good but with a lower proportion of good and very good teaching than the other two phases. The two less than satisfactory lessons were seen in this key stage.
- 19 In the Foundation Stage basic skills are taught well and this results in good progress. Lesson planning includes clear learning objectives and well matched interesting learning activities. Behaviour is managed well; adults praise good behaviour and the children respond well because they are keen to please the teachers and nursery nurses. A further strength of the teaching is the happy atmosphere that pervades the classrooms making children content, secure and enthusiastic about their learning. A regular feature noted on visits to the Foundation Stage was the enthusiasm of the children. They emulate the cheerful approach of the adults and optimistically meet the challenging learning opportunities made available to them.
- 20 The quality of teaching of English and mathematics is good at both key stages in both subjects. The provision for teaching numeracy and literacy skills is satisfactory. Teachers make good use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and basic skills are well taught in both subjects.
- 21 Teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is consistently good. Class teachers are familiar with the process of identifying pupils who have special educational needs and follow school procedures. The systems of grouping pupils for English and mathematics in Key Stage 2 and the well focused interventions of support assistants throughout the school contribute very effectively to raising the achievement of pupils who have special educational needs. The learning support assistants are well informed and work successfully in conjunction with class teachers to ensure that all pupils gain full benefit from their lessons. Some special needs teaching is individual or in small groups and when observed during the inspection it was of very good quality. The firm sensitive management of pupils results in

their good progress and the appropriate use of resources supports pupils' learning well. Teachers and assistants work hard to encourage pupils to improve speaking and listening skills as well as develop their imaginations. Where adults have a positive approach and consistently praise pupils for their efforts, pupils feel proud of their work and are ready to take on new challenges to their learning. The small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language are all fluent speakers and they make progress at similar rates to other pupils.

- 22 A much commented upon and very obvious change since the last inspection has been the way in which pupils' behaviour has improved. This has been well organised and hard won progress which is only maintained by continual reinforcement of the highest expectations. Teachers bear a great deal of the credit for this and their intention to maintain and improve behaviour is evident in all lessons. In contributing to this success, teachers show that they have been able to develop teaching styles that encourage very good relationships with their pupils. As a consequence the pupils understand that all the staff are working for their benefit and so they have become willing participants in their learning. Teachers also show that they understand that their pupils have different needs and because of an awareness of the need for equal opportunity and inclusion, patience is encouraged as those pupils who need a little longer, produce their responses. In some subjects there is now a need to look to providing more challenging material for higher attaining pupils. As standards are rising, different levels of attainment become more apparent and so this need also becomes more obvious.
- 23 All aspects of teaching have improved so that lessons are now systematically well planned with clear objectives. The best lessons make imaginative use of resources and set targets for what is to follow. Teachers have good control of the subject matter of their lessons and are adept at reinforcing skills and knowledge from other areas of the curriculum as they teach a particular subject. A very noticeable contribution to pupils' learning is made by those who support teachers in the classroom. Nursery Nurses make a very valuable contribution to the planning process and are active in the lesson itself. They support designated pupils very effectively and generally enrich the opportunities of all pupils. Teachers and nursery nurses work very well together so that pupils across the school are consistently presented with challenges and expectations of a high order.
- 24 The use of homework is satisfactory but there is a need to make greater use of information and communication technology in supporting other areas of the curriculum. Good support is in place where teaching was less than satisfactory where issues such as planning, pace and appropriateness of task are being looked at.
- 25 The most marked change over time has been in the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils. Attitudes are now very good and behaviour is good. Learning is now good. Pupils understand what is required of them in terms of effort and behaviour and teachers are skilled at letting pupils know they are cared for and that there are high expectations of them regardless of gender, age or ability. Pupils now speak highly of their school and show in lessons that they are intellectually involved and that they are willing to be responsible and active participants in the learning process.

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

- 26 The curriculum is broad and balanced and it provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities for pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory for pupils in both key stages and it is good for those children in the Foundation Stage. The provision for English language learning

is good and improving, as is the teaching of mathematical skills. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The school meets statutory requirements.

- 27 The quality of the curriculum is narrowed because the school has focused on raising attainment in English and maths. Although other subjects are taught to requirements, there is a lack of development in Years 3-6 in art, design technology geography and history. The pupils acquire the basic skills of reading writing and number. Pupils are not confident about word-processing their work and in collecting information from the Internet. There has been good improvement in the quality of the curriculum, especially through the impact of the improvements in maths and English, since the last inspection.
- 28 There is a high degree of inclusion into the curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Indeed the lower attaining pupils have made significantly better progress over the past two years than other groups, because of their enriched curriculum. The inclusion has a good impact on the moral and social learning of the pupils. The provision for under-fives is good and matched to foundation learning. The teaching of information technology is satisfactory at both key stages and under-fives.
- 29 The provision for special educational needs is good. Pupils who have special educational needs are included in all aspects of the curriculum and make good progress. Teachers have copies of their high quality individual educational plans and the majority use them well to inform planning and match work to pupils' individual needs. The monitoring process shows where there are inconsistencies in this and the school is taking steps to ensure that existing good practice pervades the whole school. The school makes sure that the provision outlined in pupils' statements is in place and is reviewed in line with Code of Practice guidance. The setting system in Key Stage 2, the introduction of the Literacy Hour and internal organisation, all enhance the curriculum, impacting well and giving lower attaining pupils good opportunities to progress well. The school states its philosophy of sensitivity to individual needs and providing an atmosphere of encouragement; this is promoted successfully throughout the school and provides a firm foundation allowing pupils who have special educational needs to flourish.
- 30 The quality of the curricular provision for English and mathematics is satisfactory. There are some limited opportunities for pupils to develop these skills in other areas of the curriculum. However opportunities for writing at length and independent research from a range of texts is limited. Whilst there are sufficient texts for pupils to use, the organisation of the library for the older pupils means that it is difficult for them to locate books. More needs to be done to make the older pupils more independent in their learning. Both the National Numeracy Strategy and the Literacy Strategy have been implemented satisfactorily.
- 31 The quality of the support given for pupils' personal, health and social development is good. The opinions of pupils are sought as to the specific provision required, visitors come from outside agencies and this development is seen as central to the pupils' development within the school.
- 32 There is a satisfactory range of extra curricular activities. These include football, basketball, multi-sports and dance, as well as choir and computer club; also pupils have the opportunity to join the local brass band. All activities are open to boys and girls. The pupils take part in local competitions in writing and music.
- 33 The school maintains satisfactory links with other agencies in the community. It provides training for nursery nurses from a local college and work experience for pupils from nearby secondary schools. The school maintains good links with local support services to help pupils

with special educational needs. Pupils in the school collect money for a range of national and local charities. There are satisfactory opportunities to extend the work of the school through visits to local places of interest; pupils in Years 5 and 6 make a residential visit. The headteacher is linked to a business working partner.

- 34 Effective links are maintained with two local secondary school to facilitate the transfer of pupils at the age of eleven.
- 35 The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. The development of pupils' sense of the spiritual is satisfactory. This is achieved mainly through assemblies but also in religious education. In assemblies pupils are expected to consider the presence of a higher being and to consider some of the mysteries of religious life.
- 36 The moral development of pupils is very good. Pupils respect each other and adults in the school. There is a strong feeling of a shared experience in the school. Rewards and sanctions are obvious and understood by the pupils, who accept them. Pupils are aware, in school, of how their behaviour affects others.
- 37 The social development of pupils is very good. Pupils are polite and respectful to each other, their teachers and other adults in the school. There are opportunities for older pupils to take responsibilities within the school. However, as the pupils get older they do not develop independence over their own learning. This is evident in the lack of extended and sustained writing and in the lack of use of the research skills acquired by the pupils.
- 38 The cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils experience western European culture through art and literature and music. They relate the ideas on Mondrian to work they do on the computer. There are good displays of western art in the corridors. A good range on non-fiction and fiction texts is available in classrooms to support pupils in their learning. They have satisfactory opportunities for exploring the cultures, ideas and differences to be found in other ethnic groups. This is supported by the teaching of religious education and English.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 39 Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is also good, as are the educational and personal support and guidance for pupils. Assessment is satisfactory, as it was at the last inspection.
- 40 Members of staff know pupils very well and because of this a good quality of care pervades the school. The school is a safe environment with all the expected safety measures in place and safety inspections recorded. Child protection procedures are good. The nominated person, the headteacher, is experienced in this field. She has good contacts and knows the local procedures. The children of the two families on the 'at risk' register are carefully monitored and personal education plans are also prepared for looked after children. The Pupil Support Co-ordinator has responsibility for this, to give it close attention. Inhalers are well controlled and the school monitors carefully any pupil taking Ritalin. One of the Nursery nurses is trained in speech therapy. Healthy living is promoted.
- 41 Procedures for the promotion of attendance are good and likely to improve as the power for analysis of the new registration system is exploited and the new Education and Social Worker becomes involved. The school has been starved of this support in recent years. The school has recently instituted telephone calls to parents on the first day of absence and this is

showing signs of success. Letters are sent home requesting reasons for absence if none has been provided, but they do not stress the importance of what has been missed. Rewards are given for 100 per cent attendance but not for improved attendance. The impact of poor attendance on pupils' education is stressed in newsletters to parents. The school is collaborating with the local authority in a drive to persuade parents of the value of education and the harm unnecessary absence can do to a child's attainment.

- 42 Procedures for promoting good behaviour are very good and are crucial for the continuing improvement of achievement. The emphasis is on good rewards, good staff training, consistency in applying sanctions, the examples set by members of staff and the strong leadership of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. When staff are new to the school, or supply teachers are used, the deputy headteacher models the behaviour policy to them until he is content that they are secure in its application. He also analyses the sanctions applied in the classroom or on the playground, so that the areas of concern are clearly identified and solutions sought. Rewards are given for academic success or progress, social success or progress and for contributing to the ethos of the school. There are good procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour, through assemblies, circle time and making a point of listening to pupils to hear their concerns and experiences.
- 43 There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. They are good at the foundation stage and in mathematics, satisfactory for English and science and some other subjects, but insufficient for subject leaders to have a picture of standards across the school in art, design technology, information technology and religious education. Standardised tests are carried out at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5 in addition to the National Tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 and on entry to reception. These tests are thoroughly analysed but the results are not collated in a form that readily shows a pupil's progress through the school. Forecasts [called targets] are made of pupils' attainment in English and Mathematics for the end of each year, expressed in National Curriculum levels, and these are compared with actual results at the year-end. Reading scores [NFER tests] are assessed at the beginning of Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 and these allow progress to be followed. Teachers compare their judgements on National Curriculum levels in order to maintain consistency.
- 44 Assessment is well used to modify what is taught in mathematics and at the foundation stage, but it is inconsistent in English and science. Some of the analysis of annual tests is put to good use. For example the question by question analysis of Key Stage 2 standard tests revealed strengths and weaknesses that were addressed in the following year's curriculum. English and mathematics work is assessed against regular learning objectives and the results used to modify what is taught. In other subjects assessment is against National Curriculum targets and the modification to the curriculum is informal. Assessment is used well to determine levels of special educational need.
- 45 The provision for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress is good at the Foundation Stage and satisfactory overall. It is good for pupils with special educational needs, whose targets are regularly reviewed and modified. Targets for other pupils are generally set according to the needs seen by teachers and there is no system for generally setting targets. The marking of work is only partially effective in helping pupils to improve. There is some good marking in English and mathematics, but there is scope for improvement in all subjects.
- 46 Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. They are informal, but effective because pupils are so well known by their teachers and because of the school's awareness of the developmental needs of the children. This is a strong feature of the pastoral care offered by the school.

- 47 The school meets the requirements for those pupils who have statements of special educational need and all are well supported. There are effective links with outside agencies to ensure the provision outlined in statements of special educational needs is implemented. The regular visits from the external learning support co-ordinator and the speech and language therapist are invaluable in supporting the school in meeting pupils' individual needs. Very good use is made of assessment information to identify pupils who have special educational needs at the beginning of their time in school. The school then carefully tracks these pupils and focuses on their needs by giving appropriate small group work or targeting their needs in class. Assessment information is also used to identify groups of pupils who have similar learning targets and to group them to facilitate focused teaching. The deployment of the good quality support staff who work in the school is effective, not only in working directly with pupils but also in gathering assessment information to support teaching strategies. The time and effort that has gone into these strategies has resulted in the school raising achievement for pupils who have special educational needs to the extent that some no longer need to be on the register. The impact of these strategies can be seen in the end of key stage test results where there is an increasing number of pupils who achieve within nationally accepted levels. The school's membership of the Dudley Education Action Zone provides a learning link worker and a 0.5 teacher to work with focus groups. The social skills groups run by the Pupil Support Co-ordinator are a further example of the good strategies used by the school to improve pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 48 Parents are positive about the school but fewer than one fifth of parents returned the questionnaire and only one attended the meeting with the registered inspector. Those that did return the questionnaire particularly liked the approachability of the school, the quality of teaching and the school management. They were concerned about the amount of homework, particularly for five year olds. The inspection team agrees with the positive points, but finds the use of homework satisfactory.
- 49 Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are properly involved from the time the school has an initial concern and are kept fully informed about their child's progress. The school is forging increasingly good links with parents, who are welcome to discuss the progress of their children informally whenever they might have a concern.
- 50 The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. Curriculum information is regularly sent out, as are newsletters. The prospectus is well presented and contains good information, although it could stress the continuity problems that arise from absence and be more precise about behaviour expectations and the involvement of parents in drawing up attendance and behaviour plans if problems arise. School reports are very descriptive about what has been enjoyed and what has been done, but are limited to only one target and contain no factual information on levels of achievement. The school provides comparative data to help parents understand the results of standardised tests. Some two thirds of parents attend the three consultation evenings on progress.
- 51 The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory. There are some good aspects, but these are offset by parents' failure to maintain good attendance and provide reasons for absence. The low return rate for questionnaires also indicates some indifference. Parents help with reading and commenting in reading records and with other homework. They support assemblies and sports activity days and twenty parents have just been recruited to help in the classroom, for example by hearing readers. The proposal to use parents in classrooms in this way is commendable and gives a good indication

of progress that is being made in improving home/school links. Eight parents run the parent fund raising committee that provides valuable finance for the school. Attendance by parents at statement review meetings is patchy, but individual education plan reviews have more parental input because parents are 'captured' when they come to collect children. Parents are free to use the community room in the school and some committees do so. A strength of the school is the extent to which parents are involved in behaviour and attitude problems, because the school sees such involvement as crucial for permanent solutions.

- 52 Children are inducted into the nursery only after a home visit has taken place. This is found to be invaluable. Children then come into the nursery one at a time so that they can learn the ways of the nursery with individual attention. When they move into reception there are meetings for parents and children with taster sessions in the term before.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 53 The headteacher and her deputy provide very good leadership in all aspects of the school's work. Their shared vision has guided the school through the good progress it has made since the last inspection. They are leading the school very effectively into the next phase of its development. They have maintained staff morale through a difficult few years and have successfully brought about a sense of optimism. The school is benefiting from its association with the Dudley Education Action Zone. The headteacher provides good professional development for her senior teachers, valuing their opinion and giving them opportunities to demonstrate their management skills. The teaching staff are well aware of their particular roles and responsibilities and support all school developments with a commitment that is impressive. They are fully aware of the school's aims, values and policies and have been particularly effective in supporting the changes necessary since the last inspection. The aims of the school are reflected very well in all aspects of school life.
- 54 The effectiveness of subject managers varies from satisfactory to very good. All co-ordinators are responsible for their budget. They know the strengths and weaknesses of their subject and have suitable plans for improvement. All monitor teachers' planning to check what is taught. Those who manage the school's provision for the core curriculum subjects of English, mathematics and science have had the opportunity to observe teaching in their subject. They have given colleagues valuable suggestions for improving their practice and this has contributed well to improved teaching. The roles for the co-ordinators for the other areas of the curriculum are less well developed and the senior management team has identified this as an area for development.
- 55 The management of special educational needs is very good. The Pupil Support Co-ordinator is proactive and imaginative in organising the provision for pupils' individual needs. The special needs action plan is well considered, focusing on whole staff training needs as well as new initiatives such as Anger Management for pupils, reviewing current practice in line with government guidelines and making the school a dyslexia-friendly environment. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs visits regularly, knows the children and is very supportive of the developments proposed within the school. The good use of resources and the school philosophy of inclusion result in a good provision and a consequent improvement in levels of achievement.
- 56 The governing body fulfils its legal requirements satisfactorily. All legally required policies are in place. The governors meet regularly to review the progress of a range of issues on both an informal and formal basis and they are now acting as the necessary critical friends, which is much appreciated by the head and staff. They are fully aware of the school's aims, values

and policies and support them well. They have made a significant contribution to the school's recent improvement and have the capacity to help the school improve further.

- 57 The school has a very good number of teachers and support staff. Teachers are suitably qualified, have a wide range of experience and work very well together as a team. Classroom support staff have a very good level of expertise and give good support and guidance to pupils in their care. Staffing is now stable and this is beginning to have a positive impact on standards, especially in the Foundation Stage and infant departments. Procedures for the induction and support of staff new to the school are good. The induction programme for newly qualified teachers is good and staff who joined the school last year comment on how helpful they have found the support. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are good. Staff attend a range of on-going training that reflects a good balance between the needs of the school and the professional development of individual staff.
- 58 The school has a suitable performance management policy through which targets have been set for the headteacher. The school has adapted the recommended procedures for performance management for teachers to suit the particular requirements of Wren's Nest primary. These procedures are good.
- 59 The school improvement plan is drawn up in consultation with all staff and its priorities established. The document identifies the school's priorities well but the success criteria tend to be concerned with establishing aspects of the school's provision. It is therefore difficult to know exactly what level of change or improvement is being sought. The finance committee allocates the budget according to the priorities identified and successfully monitors its operation. Development priorities beyond the current year have not been identified as yet. The recommendations of the last audit report have been implemented successfully. The school is aware of the principles of best value and makes good use of support from the local education authority to guide its spending decisions. Administration and clerical staff have efficient systems that support the work of the school well.
- 60 There have been major improvements in the buildings and decoration of the school. The accommodation both indoors and outdoors is spacious, bright and welcoming. The buildings are well cared for and kept in good order by the caretaker, who is very committed to the school. There has been much redecoration and the school premises are now bright and welcoming. The school is free from graffiti and is well cared for by pupils. The overall condition has been improved with a range of measures such as extensive carpeting that have reduced the noise created by general movement around the school.
- 61 School resources are good overall. In particular resources for the teaching of music have improved significantly since the last inspection. The school libraries are well stocked with a good selection of appropriate books at each level that reflect and expand the cultural interests and learning of the pupils. However, although the libraries are easily accessible to pupils they are under-used at present.
- 62 Pupils enter the school with basic skills that are on the whole well below average. By the time they leave at the age of 11 pupils have made good progress. Taking the overall good quality of teaching, the positive way in which the school is managed and the standards pupils achieve, often from a low base, the school can be judged to be effective. Taking into account the good standard of education that the school provides but the high costs incurred, overall the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63 The senior management of the school and the governors should;-

- (1) Raise standards further by:-
 - a. Increase the opportunities for pupils especially in Key Stage 2 to use their speaking and listening skills in a variety of situations
 - b. Consider and implement specific strategies that will give pupils the opportunities to develop their creative and imaginative writing
 - c. Target the more able pupils so they achieve their potential
 - d. Improve access to the library and encourage reading for pleasure
 - e. Improve the transition of pupils at Years 2 and 3 in mathematics
 - f. Develop the planned use of maths in other areas of the curriculum in order to re-enforce pupils learning
 - g. Develop pupils confidence in mathematics by make group work more active
(See paragraphs 8,22,30,75,78,80,81,87,89,91,93)

- (2) Continue with initiatives to improve attendance and to set targets and rewards for parents and pupils with unsatisfactory attendance
(See paragraphs 16,41,50,51)

- (3) Systematically plan for the use of information and communication technology so as to make greater use of classroom computers in support of the whole curriculum
(See Paragraphs 24,81,90,91,140,144)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	78
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	14	40	21	1	1	0
Percentage	1	18	51	27	1	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	60	298
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	187

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	11	81

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	12

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	29

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	23	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	19	16
	Girls	14	13	12
	Total	31	32	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78 (60)	80 (48)	70 (38)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	15	16
	Girls	13	12	14
	Total	30	27	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (54)	68 (56)	75 (75)
	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 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	16	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	5	6
	Girls	7	6	7
	Total	10	11	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	30 (23)	33 (34)	39 (40)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	6	7
	Girls	7	11	11
	Total	10	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	30 (23)	52 (38)	55 (34)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	27
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	0
White	217
Any other minority ethnic group	8

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.2
Average class size	27.1

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	260

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	60
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	98
Number of pupils per FTE adult	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	863,971
Total expenditure	861,619
Expenditure per pupil	2,491
Balance brought forward from previous year	-2,352
Balance carried forward to next year	0

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	354
Number of questionnaires returned	61

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	33	7	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	44	48	3	2	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	49	3	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	36	25	7	5
The teaching is good.	52	38	3	2	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	44	11	2	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	28	5	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	46	3	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	39	46	10	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	48	41	7	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	46	3	2	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	30	18	3	23

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

- 64 There are 60 pupils who attend the nursery part time and a further 30 pupils attend full time. In the reception class there are 24 children who attend school full time. A similar number of children are expected to start in the Spring term and they will form a second reception class.
- 65 In the nursery there is one teacher and three nursery nurses. There is some additional support for children who have been identified as having special educational needs. The reception class is managed by the teacher who works very closely with the full-time nursery nurse.
- 66 A carefully planned induction programme helps children settle into school life with ease. Staff and children welcomed new children who joined the school during the inspection week making their initial days in the Foundation Stage a happy experience.
- 67 The school's provision for children in the nursery and reception has improved since the last inspection and is now good. The curriculum is based on the 'Six areas of learning' providing children with good broad and balanced experiences. At the time of inspection the school was in the process of revising the schemes of work and updating to ensure the Early Learning Goals will be properly implemented. The school provides a wide range of challenging and focused experiences to promote personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. On entry to the nursery, standards of attainment are well below national expectations. Teaching in nursery and reception is consistently of a high standard, which has a positive effect on children's learning. As a result most children achieve well and are in line to achieve the learning goals in all six areas of learning by the end of the reception class and are well prepared for the next stage of their education in school. Children who have special educational needs are supported well and make very good progress. Additional support enables them to take a full part in all activities.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 68 By the time they have completed the Foundation Stage, the majority of pupils have made good progress in their personal and social development and reach national expectations in this area. This shows good achievement and reflects the good teaching for children under five. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given very high priority. They enjoy coming to school and those children who started nursery during the inspection despite initial tears were able to settle happily. In the nursery and the reception classes, routines are being established with an emphasis on helping children to develop an understanding of appropriate behaviour and what is right and wrong. The nursery organisation is based on family groups well managed by the three nursery nurses. Nursery children develop their co-operative skills as they sit on their numbered cushions during number work with their teacher and join in willingly to tidy up their room at the end of the day. Children in the reception co-operate as they use construction toys to build towers and share books in the library area. They are encouraged to become independent workers and understand that they should help each other if their teacher is working with a different group of children. All adults in the Foundation Stage are good role models and children follow their example in having a happy positive attitude to their learning and to each other. Older children work for sustained periods of time and take pride in their writing successes. Relationships are good and children play well, learning to share and work together in a variety of situations such as role-play and outdoor play. Children are learning to respond to instructions. Nursery children know the

tambourine sound means stop and listen, and the children in the reception class respond well when they are praised for 'good listening'. Children respond to questions but a significant minority do not initiate conversation. Adults' high expectations of behaviour and their positive reinforcement of good behaviour have a positive impact on children's personal and social development. All adults work hard to ensure that the classrooms are happy places to be where children can grow in confidence and achieve well.

Communication, language and literacy

69 By the time they leave the Foundation Stage, the majority of children reach nationally expected levels of attainment even though they enter the school with skills that are well below average. This improvement reflects well the consistently good opportunities for children to develop the spoken word and to enjoy books. The nursery and reception classes provide a wide range of stimulating experiences and activities to develop and extend children's language and literacy skills. Teaching is good and appropriate elements of the National Literacy Strategy have been successfully introduced. All teachers and support staff use good questioning to check that children have listened carefully to instructions. For example, in the nursery the teacher encourages children to describe the various socks that are being matched in a mathematical activity, and in the family groups nursery nurses encourage children to describe the feel or colour of items they are matching or sorting. Older children in the reception class discuss the characteristics of zoo animals when they categorise them into stripy, spotty or plain animals. Snack times provide good opportunities for children to talk about their own experiences. At the time of inspection some children spoke clearly and confidently but many still use a limited vocabulary, speaking in short phrases or single words rather than complete sentences. Adults share books with children and encourage a desire to read. In one of the nursery groups the children sit to hear a story and each child holds a teddy bear and makes sure that teddy listens carefully to the story. Reception children are able to appreciate and enjoy rhyme in poetry as they read together 'Rumble in the Jungle' on National Poetry Day. Children know that writing communicates meaning and older children associate sounds with letters. Children coming into the reception class can form recognisable letters and copy their names from a name card. In reception they improve on these skills underwriting sentences and then writing their own short sentences with spacing and the correct use of a capital letter and full stop. Attractively labelled displays, name cards, alphabet and sound friezes help children develop early reading and writing skills. Children write their own sentence about Elmer the elephant to accompany their paintings. The task board in the reception class shows the daily activities as well as the daily literacy targets and children are already in the routine of referring to the task board to find out their activities. This is proving to be a successful method of encouraging reading and independence skills.

Mathematical development

70 By the time they have completed the Foundation Stage, most children have made good progress and reach national expectations in mathematical development. This is a result of the happy learning environment where number work is fun. The teaching of mathematics is consistently good. The nursery and reception classes provide a wide range of activities to promote mathematical understanding. Children have many exciting opportunities to compare, match, sort, and count using a wide range of games routines and experiences. In the nursery class for example children match socks and peg the pairs on a washing line, using correct mathematical vocabulary to compare the different sized socks. Their understanding of comparative sizes is further extended as they re-enact Goldilocks and the Three Bears using teddies, beds, chairs and bowls of varying sizes. Children recognise circles, triangles, rectangles and squares and explore the nature of three-dimensional shapes as they work with

play dough. Older children consolidate their counting from zero to twenty and back again and work enthusiastically with counting equipment to add one onto numbers under ten. Children further reinforce their knowledge of simple addition as they sing counting songs such as 'We have all got calculators in our heads' The teacher skilfully uses every opportunity to encourage children to count for example checking the number of children having packed lunches. The reception children enjoy singing their calculator song as they line up for lunch – counting is a treat and good fun.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 71 By the time they have completed the Foundation Stage, most children reach nationally expected levels of attainment in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children are interested in the world around them and this is promoted well through the range of interesting opportunities provided. Children play competently with a variety of construction and modelling materials. Though the inspection was early in the term, several children were able to use the mouse to research information about wild cats in 'My First Amazing Dictionary'. Children use simple modelling tools and develop their skills in cutting folding and sticking. Children develop their sense of touch as they describe the texture of dried spaghetti and investigate sand, paint and play dough, recognising and naming a variety of colours. Children show curiosity when they use play dough, asking questions and making their own observations. Adults promote a sense of time when they talk with children about tomorrow and activities that will happen later in the day. Children become aware of the needs of others as they prepare for the Harvest Festival, examining vegetables and dried goods and developing their concept of giving and thanking. Reception children pray respectfully at the end of their class assembly and the nursery children join reverently in a prayer of thanks when they have their daily snack.

Physical development

- 72 By the end of the Foundation Stage, the majority of pupils reach the nationally expected levels of ability in their physical development. There are good opportunities for children to take part in safe out door play; the nursery has a secure segregated play area and a softfall surface, outdoor toys and equipment enhance this. Reception children enjoy the daily opportunities to play with Key Stage 1 pupils on the lower school playground. There are structured physical education classes but it was not possible to observe one during the inspection. At playtime adults interact well with children developing their confidence and skills as they enjoy their outdoor play. At all times children are taught to move and play safely with consideration for others. Emphasis is placed on developing children's skills when handling tools, pencils, construction toys and malleable materials.

Creative development

- 73 By the time they leave the Foundation Stage, most children make good progress and reach nationally expected levels of attainment in their creative development. Teaching is very good and staff provide a wide range of experiences in art, music, story and imaginative play. Children enjoy singing and join in with favourite songs. Reception children listen attentively to musical extracts and use happy and sad lollipops to show their mood from each piece of music. They are able to sing in character as either Little Red Riding Hood or the wolf and enjoy the frequent opportunities to join in counting songs or miming the actions in animal songs such as the 'spotty tiger'. The Reception teacher plays 'tidy up' music as a very good strategy to encourage children to clear away quickly. The children enjoy the challenge as well as the music. Many of the children have underdeveloped imaginations and the emphasis throughout the Foundation Stage on developing children's imagination and language through

role-play and stories is well placed. Children's artwork is proudly displayed around the classrooms.

ENGLISH

- 74 Standards of work seen during the inspection in literacy (reading and writing) at ages seven and eleven are below the nationally expected level. This is an improvement since the last report and shows that over time the school has raised standards in English. This improving trend is more obvious with the younger children and reflects school initiatives in focusing on the individual needs of children on entry to the school and in the organisation of teaching groups for the younger pupils. Careful monitoring and planning, together with effective teaching, enable pupils who have special educational needs to make good progress. The effect is a decrease in the number of pupils achieving the lower levels of attainment but the school has yet to implement strategies to raise the attainment of the more able pupils throughout the school. Pupils who have English as a second language make good progress. Arrangements for homework are satisfactory.
- 75 The school has worked hard to bring about these improvements. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented successfully and has led to more effective lesson planning. The quality of teaching has improved and there are good systems in place, which monitor pupils' progress and allow the school to set targets for improvement.
- 76 Standards in speaking and listening are low. Teachers provide a satisfactory range of opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. The school has identified oral communication as a priority because many children arrive at the school with limited competence in this area. Teaching throughout the school focuses consistently on increasing the opportunities for pupils to do 'good listening' and to develop their confidence in communicating with each other and the adults in the school. Younger pupils increase their confidence when they read a shared text and join in refrain sentences. Pupils in Year 2 consider video evidence as a source of information about food grown and eaten in Kenya, and make good progress in developing their conversation skills as they talk in pairs and in small discussion groups. Pupils in Year 6 develop their listening and speaking skills as they contribute to a discussion on biographies but progress is restricted because of pupils' poor concentration skills. Later in the week with a more factual activity, the same pupils were able to confidently describe their task as they planned curriculum vitae and autobiographies for Charlotte Bronte. A strong feature of teaching throughout the school, but particularly in the five to seven year group, is the quality of questioning. Teachers and support staff use questions well to encourage pupils to think carefully about their tasks and to provoke thoughtful discussion about the structure of words and sentences, how to organise instructions and plan a poster to present information. In Year 1 the teacher praises 'good listening' during the dance lesson and so reinforces well the good work being done in class lessons. Speaking and listening continues to be an area for development as pupils' achievement is below national expectations. Extensive data collected by the school shows that good teaching strategies and commitment to raising pupils self esteem is having a positive effect on pupils in Years 1 and 2, and the indications are that this aspect of English will improve during the next twelve months.
- 77 Overall attainment in reading is below national expectations because despite raising the achievements of less able pupils the school has not yet fully addressed the needs of more able pupils so very few pupils attain the higher levels that would normally be expected. The school's strategies for teaching reading are satisfactory in raising attainment but few pupils are enthusiastic readers and there is little evidence that pupils read for pleasure. The school has a variety of graded reading books to support pupils' learning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2

build on the early reading skills of associating letters and sounds and are able to use this phonic knowledge to decode unfamiliar words. They use picture clues well to help them establish meaning. All the pupils have reading records with recorded comments from parents and staff. More able pupils read with fluency and expression but limited speaking skills restrict their ability to retell favourite stories. Pupils' ability to predict and venture opinions about their books is also limited. They use the school library to change their reading books but do not make use the library for independent research.

- 78 As pupils progress through the school they build on their existing skills in reading and have good opportunities during their English lessons to become familiar with a range of texts. When reading alone older pupils in Year 6 are able to read fluently though when questioned it is evident that they do not always understand the text. A less able pupil showed good understanding of the story he was reading. By the age of eleven pupils are familiar with the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts. They can use the contents and index pages to help locate information but have a hazy understanding of the purpose of a glossary. During their literacy lessons pupils become familiar with a variety of genres from poetry to newspaper reports and the work of classical writers as well as modern children's authors. A topic-based approach to studying the Victorians allowed teachers to introduce Charles Dickens as an eminent writer but few of the Year 6 pupils had heard of or read his books apart from *Oliver Twist*. Pupils do not read widely though one Year 6 pupil expressed a preference for poetry and was able to recite a poem learned in class. In discussion with older pupils it became evident they have limited opportunities to read to an adult or for sustained silent reading. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are more positive and keen to read than the older pupils and it is evident that these pupils benefit from their introduction to the literacy strategy at an earlier age.
- 79 Standards in writing are below national expectations. Pupils' attainment in writing has improved and again reflects the school strategy of raising the attainment of lower achieving pupils and a future need to raise the achievement of the more able. By the age of seven most pupils can write in complete sentences which are generally correctly punctuated. Common short words are usually spelt correctly and attempts at longer words are phonetically acceptable. Pupils write for a number of different purposes including retelling stories, writing informal letters and recording information about characters, events and story type when they compare books. Higher attaining pupils produce stories that have a structure and use word banks to help express their ideas by using an increasingly wide range of vocabulary. Pupils in this age group acquire skills in letter formation and develop a simple script. Higher attaining pupils use a joined cursive script.
- 80 By the age of eleven, pupils extend their range of writing across the curriculum in a number of subjects. They are able to write descriptions, instructions and reports. They make good use of story planners to ensure they plan characters, setting and plot appropriately. They use stories such as *The Hobbit* as a basis for script writing and refer to a thesaurus to help them use more imaginative words in their descriptive writing. Pupils develop their writing to include more complex sentences. They use punctuation with increasing accuracy and are developing skills in planning and redrafting to produce a final copy. Lower attainers are less focused in their writing. However with help they are able to develop their ideas in short sentences appropriately punctuated. Spelling is relatively weak but the recent introduction of '500 Word Book' supports pupils well in improving their spelling and developing knowledge of spelling rules and conventions. Work is usually presented with care and by the age of eleven many pupils have developed a clear style of handwriting, although some pupils are still using print.

- 81 Pupils throughout the school are generally restricted when they are required to write imaginatively. This relates directly to the lack of opportunities pupils experience to read and develop their imaginations and is also linked to the limited vocabulary and oral skills that many pupils possess when they join the school. This is a challenge that the school recognises and intends to address initially by purchasing a broader range of reading books and a more rigorous checking of reading diaries. Pupils word-process their work but there was little evidence during the inspection of information and communication technology being used consistently to support pupils' research skills.
- 82 The overall teaching is good. This is an improvement since the last report. This has a positive effect upon the standards of work achieved and on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Basic skills are taught well and this helps pupils to make good progress.
- 83 Teachers throughout the school have a good knowledge and understanding of teaching literacy and plan carefully within the National Literacy Strategy. Objectives are made clear to pupils at the beginning of each lesson, so they see the purpose of the lesson. Teachers make good use of the very competent support staff who work well with groups of pupils, providing support for their learning. Good relationships are established in all classes and the majority of teachers manage pupils well with genuine praise and encouragement. This is reflected in the pupils' enthusiasm to learn. The organisation of the older pupils into ability groups for English allows more individual attention to be given to lower attaining pupils as they are taught in small groups. The larger groups of average and above average ability pupils benefit from the additional adult who works with them. The results of this are evident in that the school has managed to raise achievement and decrease the percentage of pupils who gain lower marks. However one of the next challenges must be to raise achievement for the more able pupils who are not fully extended in their learning.
- 84 The features of the more successful teaching include good questioning skills, lessons which have a lively pace, and high expectation of attainment and behaviour. Strengths in teaching include activities that are well matched to pupils' needs so presenting them with a challenge and success. This increases self-esteem and motivates pupils to learn more. The plenary session is used well by many teachers to allow pupils to share their new learning and for pupils to evaluate their work. This encourages pupils to share ideas, develop speaking and listening skills and be aware of their new knowledge and skills. For example pupils in Year 2 moved enthusiastically to the carpet ready to share their work. They responded very well to the probing questioning from their teacher and were able to evaluate their own use of alliteration in writing poetry. In Year 6 the lively pace of the lesson and interactions between the teacher and the pupils meant that pupils made very good progress in writing a biography for Charlotte Bronte and were reluctant to finish at the end of the lesson. Lower attaining pupils in Year 6 enjoyed the opportunities to 'phone a friend' as they supported each other and made good progress in understanding the different pronunciations of 'ough'. Year 3 pupils made very good progress in their understanding of synonyms and using the thesaurus because the lesson was very well planned with well-structured activities. Pupils worked confidently and were able to explain their work enthusiastically.
- 85 Pupils who have special educational needs are supported well by class teachers and support staff. They also benefit from the support they receive in small groups and make good progress. Individual and small group teaching is consistently very good. Pupils have detailed individual plans with clear and achievable targets. However there is an inconsistency in the use made of the individual plans to inform teachers' planning. Through careful monitoring of pupils' progress the school has been able to identify this issue and already has strategies to improve the situation.

86 Subject management is good. The role of the co-ordinator is defined by an appropriate job description. The school has developed effective systems to monitor the progress of pupils as they move through the school and good use is made of national tests to identify areas of concern relating to individuals and classes. The school has made several improvements since the last inspection in order to address the key issue regarding standards in all aspects of English throughout the school. The role of the co-ordinator has been clarified. Subject policy documents are to be reviewed and amended by a working party led by the co-ordinator. The co-ordinator has started a cycle of monitoring; the intention is to make the initial monitoring cycle more demanding. The recent evaluation of literacy in the school has resulted in a useful report including observations and advice for teachers. As a result of the monitoring process it is evident that there is a problem of continuity and progression for pupils moving between key stages. The school plans to take action about this and there is to be an exchange of expertise between teachers in the two key stages so they all appreciate the different teaching methods in the school. The aim is to ensure there will be a consistent whole school approach to the teaching of phonics. Resources to support teaching and learning are satisfactory. The two libraries hold an adequate supply of books but these need to be increased. In conversation with pupils it became evident that the libraries are underused and not pivotal to pupils' progress in reading.

MATHEMATICS

87 The attainment of pupils by the age of eleven is well below the national average. Standards of attainment at the age of seven are below the national averages. This is confirmed by observations during the inspection and the outcomes of the assessments made by the school. However, there has been an improvement over the past three years, notably amongst the lower and higher attaining pupils. These changes have been the result of greater emphasis on teaching lower attaining pupils and the monitoring of pupils' progress more closely. Standards could be higher, especially for those pupils of near average ability. The needs of these pupils have been addressed by changing the groupings in which pupils are taught. Pupils are now more clearly set by ability in Years 3-6 although this is too new to have had an impact on standards.

88 Standards in Years 1-2 are rising at a more rapid pace than in Years 3-6. There is a drop in pupils' performance as they pass from Year 2 to Year 3. This has been recognised by the school and as a result more activity-based work has been introduced in Year 3 to help pupils develop their mathematical imagination. The targets currently set for the school are realistic and achievable, although, on unconfirmed results for 2001, they were not met. There is a significant number of pupils with special educational needs. Whilst they achieve well against their previous learning they do not achieve national averages. The high rate of pupil absence also contributes to the overall lack of achievement.

89 Improvements made since the last inspection report are good. The quality of teaching has improved and relationships between teachers and their pupils are more positive. In Years 1 and 2 results have begun to improve. This improvement is slower in Years 3-6 as pupils have not previously developed a confidence in handling number, or in reading mathematical problems. Careful monitoring of pupil performance is beginning to be used to set targets for individual pupils to achieve.

90 Pupils in Years 3-6 are not confident in number skills and this means that their pace of learning, especially in mental maths sessions, is slow. Their lack of confidence in using mathematical vocabulary means that their ability to explain their reasons for particular ways of doing calculations is limited. This lack of confidence also means that pupils give up easily

in set tasks when they begin to encounter difficulty. Information and communication technology is under-used to support pupils in achieving small yet progressive advancements in their learning. Measuring is used in science and in geography pupils in Year 2 and Years 4/5 draw graphs and analyse data, but the opportunities for reinforcing number work across the subjects of the curriculum is unplanned and patchy. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The few pupils with English as a foreign language also make good progress.

- 91 The quality of teaching and learning is good. Nearly 90 per cent of the teaching is good and better. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers make good use of the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy to plan their lessons so as to make a direct impact on pupils' learning. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are very good and this contributes to the positive and challenging atmosphere of lessons. In mental activities, teachers use time limits to challenge pupils and they expect pupils to explain their reasons for making calculations. Pupils are encouraged to work in groups to consolidate their learning. At the end of each lesson teachers review progress so that pupils can assess what they have learnt and what they are expected to do to take their learning further. Pupils are very well supported in their learning by trained assistants.
- 92 However, although pupils are seated in groups for activities, they work as individuals and there is a large number of worksheets on which pupils are expected to work. This inability to work in groups means that the opportunities for pupils to develop their spoken mathematical language are limited. Homework is set regularly but there is insufficient monitoring of its completion.
- 93 The overall quality of pupils' learning is good. Pupils are keen, polite and eager to learn, although they lack confidence in their learning. Pupils are given some opportunities to develop their spoken language in parts of lessons.
- 94 The co-ordination of the subject is good. The co-ordinator collects and organises assessments on pupils and this is used together with the results of monitoring teaching to raise expectations of pupils' achievement. The co-ordinator offers enthusiastic and knowledgeable leadership and changes made are evaluated and reviewed. The success of the leadership can clearly be seen in the improvements in Years 1 and 2.

SCIENCE

- 95 Pupils' attainment in science by the end of Key Stage 2 is below national averages. On the basis of teacher assessments and scrutiny of work, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national expectations. The percentage of pupils achieving above the expected level (Level 3 at Key Stage 1 and Level 5 at Key Stage 2) is below the national average. The situation is an improving one with the score obtained in national tests in 2001 showing a considerable improvement on that achieved in 2000. The average attainment of pupils in the four years 1997 to 2000, in Key Stage 2 science tests, was below the national average and below those achieved by schools in similar circumstances. The improved results at both key stages can be attributed to a number of factors including consistent planning, very good use of practical and investigative work and rigorous monitoring of teaching.
- 96 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment due to the practical nature of the work reinforcing understanding, good support from the class teacher and teaching assistants and provision of work that meets their needs.

- 97 By the age of seven pupils are able to make detailed observations, use the principles of fair testing and describe, in detail, what they are doing. They record their work in a standard scientific format and make good use of appropriate scientific vocabulary. Scrutiny of last year's work revealed an over-reliance on worksheets and some variable presentation but this year's work is an improvement with teachers suggesting strategies for improving work and providing a range of recording formats. By the end of Year 2 pupils had studied work on life-cycles, sorting, forces, sounds, differences and similarities, materials and how seeds grow. In one Year 2 class, pupils were observed undertaking an exciting and challenging lesson exploring the five senses. The teacher presented the lesson as a mystery challenge and the pupils were most excited and thrilled to discover the answers to the mysteries using their five senses. They knew what was expected of them and how to record their findings accurately and effectively. Pupils work well together and maintain good levels of concentration.
- 98 By the age of 11 there is continued experimentation and investigations with all lessons seen involving practical work. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have built upon previous work and studied electricity, forces, states of matter, the human body, materials, micro-organisms and famous scientists from history. All the classrooms visited made good use of interactive displays to stimulate pupil interest, provide detailed information and present completed work. In all the practical work pupils were aware of the need to apply the principles of fair testing and knew how to include a control within their experimental work. Year 6 pupils were observed designing an experiment to investigate the phenomenon of water evaporation and the factors which affect the rate of evaporation. Year 4 pupils were making detailed observations of soil structure and undertook an experiment to discover which components of soil were porous and how this property could be measured. Pupils use scientific language well and in the correct context. The pupils rely on a great deal of support to record their results and many pupils lack the self-confidence to articulate conclusions from their observations.
- 99 Overall the quality of teaching is good. All the lessons seen were at least satisfactory with several either good or very good. The best lessons were well paced, used a wide variety of teaching strategies and incorporated investigative work for all the pupils. The teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge, were well prepared and managed the classes effectively. Such lessons had high expectations of what the pupils could achieve and teachers were not prepared to accept poor quality work. Assessment procedures are under developed with teachers collecting a good deal of information on a regular basis but not always using it effectively to track either individuals or groups of pupils in order to focus the work more efficiently. Day to day marking is done regularly but needs to include strategies for the pupils to use to improve the quality of their written work.
- 100 Management of the subject is good with the recently appointed co-ordinator undertaking rigorous monitoring of teaching, regular scrutiny of planning and instigating appropriate training for staff. She is in the process of updating the policy and incorporating even more investigative work. The priorities for development are to raise attainment in Key Stage 2, particularly at the higher level, to improve lesson structure and to improve pupils' recording. No use of information technology was seen during the inspection and this is an area for development. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection with more resources, increased teacher confidence, more effective planning and better national test results. Science makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' moral and social development with visits to scientific places of interest, an opportunity to view a visiting planetarium, participation in the Victorian Day [and study of Victorian scientists] and extensive use of collaborative group work.

ART AND DESIGN

- 101 It was only possible to observe three art lessons in Key Stage 2 and one lesson in Key Stage 1 during the inspection. Judgements are based on these lessons, analysis of pupils' work in displays around the school and in their sketchbooks and on discussions with teachers, the subject co-ordinator and with pupils.
- 102 Provision for art and design is satisfactory overall. Pupils aged seven attain the standards expected for their age and make appropriate progress in acquiring the necessary skills. They use a range of materials and techniques correctly and draw carefully both from what they observe and from their imaginations. They discuss the work of well-known artists with enthusiasm and draw or paint in the style effectively. Pupils at eleven currently attain standards below those expected for their age but have made satisfactory progress over time. Although they draw and paint, their skills lack maturity. Their knowledge of famous artists is limited and they find it difficult to describe their own responses to their own art and that of others. They have little experience of working with textiles, clay or printing.
- 103 These findings are comparable with those of the last inspection. There is no significant difference in attainment and progress between boys and girls and between pupils of different cultural backgrounds. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language attain standards similar to their classmates and make good progress because of the good support they receive. Good use is made of opportunities within art lessons to extend their speaking and listening skills.
- 104 Pupils enjoy their art lessons, concentrating closely and paying good attention to teachers' instructions and to each other's suggestions. Conversation during art lessons is about the task in hand. However, they do not talk easily about the techniques they have used, nor about their responses to the work of other artists. Many are not positive about their own work and were not keen to show and explain their work during the inspection. This is unusual and of concern to staff. However, at present teachers do not make sufficient use of display to address this issue by celebrating pupils' efforts and achievement in art.
- 105 By the end of Year 2 pupils mix paint to make new colours successfully. They experiment with a range of techniques and use a variety of media such as coloured pencil, pastels and watercolours. They consider the work of other artists and then produce their own work in a similar style. For instance, through a study of the work of Georgia O'Keefe pupils imitated her poppies and lilies and then adapted the style in their own studies of irises. They have worked with collage, combining paint and paper collage effectively for example in large-scale pieces representing some aspect of their school. A whole-class project creating a sculpture from natural materials was effective in developing pupils' understanding that art is also collaborative.
- 106 Older pupils use a range of media and techniques, such as pencil sketching, paint, pastels and watercolours. Interesting studies of moving figures were worked on during the inspection and some of these reached the expected standards for their age. However, many pupils have unsatisfactory colour-mixing skills, asking for information about which colours are needed to make a particular new colour. Their experience of sculpture, textile work and printing is also limited. Teachers are very aware of this and give pupils a lot of support to extend their skills quickly. Similarly, marking in pupils' sketchbooks is constructive, giving pupils suggestions for how to improve their work further.
- 107 From the lessons observed, teaching overall is good. Positive elements noted were that good questioning extends pupils' observation. This promotes their consideration of details within

shape and colour and develops their awareness of the composition of a picture to good effect, such as when pupils studied closely a part of a picture and used these guided observations to complete it. Pupils are encouraged to examine elements of texture as well as colour and shape before commencing their own work. Teachers are careful to promote the use of appropriate vocabulary, such as 'line', 'relief', 'outline', and 'tone'. Teachers share their own expertise generously to develop and extend pupils' skills. Some teachers make good use of information technology, for instance in investigating uses of pattern and shape during their study of the work of Modigliani.

- 108 The scheme of work ensures that pupils have satisfactory experience each year of most elements of art - painting, drawing, printmaking, textile work and sculpture. However, the lack of a subject co-ordinator means that there is insufficient monitoring of the school's provision for art to ensure that pupils build progressively upon skills and knowledge learned in previous years. Where they are used, pupils' sketchbooks show a clear development in the levels of skills used. However, the use of sketchbooks as a permanent record of pupils' development is inconsistent across the school. This means that at present much of their value is lost. Although good use is made of the work of Western artists to promote pupils' understanding of art, there is insufficient use of the work of artists from other cultures.
- 109 There has been no art co-ordinator for the last two years. The headteacher and deputy share the overseeing of the subject and monitor standards through looking at displays and at children's' work. However, with their many other responsibilities they have little opportunity to actively promote developments in the school's provision for art. Since art can be a key element in raising pupils' self-esteem a new co-ordinator should be found quickly. Resources are plentiful and well organised and are beginning to be used effectively to promote pupils' learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 110 Design and technology is timetabled for alternate half terms with art and design and during the inspection no design and technology was taught. Judgements are based on the analysis of teachers' planning, pupils' artefacts, their design notes and conversations with pupils. Pupils enjoy design and technology projects and talk with enthusiasm about their models and how they made them. Shared projects develop team-working skills well.
- 111 Provision for design technology is satisfactory. Pupils at seven attain the standards expected for their age and make appropriate progress in acquiring the necessary skills. Pupils at eleven currently attain standards below those expected for their age but have made satisfactory progress over time. These findings are comparable with those of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are supported well and make similar progress to their classmates. Good use is made of opportunities within design technology lessons to extend their speaking and listening skills.
- 112 The standards in Key Stage 1 are the result of sound teaching which promotes and encourages pupils to design and reflect upon the successes of their designs. Pupils' proposals show clearly the methods and materials they plan to use and they also consider variations in need from a design. For instance, when designing a model playground, pupils investigated a range of joining techniques to select the best for each element of the model. Pupils have good manipulative skills, as seen in the accurate cutting and stitching used when they were making hand puppets. They have also made sound use of information technology when investigating repeating patterns as part of their designs for 'Joseph's coat' and when researching on the Internet for their project on playgrounds.

- 113 In Key Stage 2 pupils use an increasing range of tools, materials and components. Younger pupils have investigated the use of pneumatics when designing and making ‘monsters’ with moving parts (such as mouths that open or tongues that stick out). They also made good use of information technology in this project to research ‘monsters’. They have successfully evaluated the characteristics of stable structures using pipe cleaners to make tall towers. Their designs for picture frames show a sound awareness of the range of shapes and materials that could be used to make the frames free-standing. Older pupils have less experience of designing and evaluating. Food technology projects emphasise food hygiene and safe use of kitchen utensils as well as the functions of different foodstuffs, such as different breads. Their evaluations of structures include only a limited amount of practical work and their evaluations are unsophisticated. Although a reasonable variety of the projects covered within the two-year cycle are reasonably varied, pupils’ work currently lacks the depth expected for their age.
- 114 Design and technology projects include a suitable balance of investigative, designing and making tasks. However, the curriculum does not ensure that pupils have a balanced experience of assignments using a range of materials. For instance, last year, pupils in Years 5 and 6 covered two food technology units but none that used electrical and mechanical components or textiles.
- 115 The school has a satisfactory supply of tools and a good stock of consumable materials of sufficiently good quality to promote the development of pupils’ manipulative skills well. The co-ordinator is inexperienced in the subject and has not yet received suitable training. She has identified that the assessment procedures are currently unsatisfactory. She monitors teachers’ planning but does not make sufficient use of pupils’ work to monitor standards attained across the school.

GEOGRAPHY

- 116 Standards of attainment by the age of eleven are below those expected of pupils this age. Standards are in line with expectations by the age of seven. Pupils develop observational skills in Years 1 and 2, but the further development of enquiry skills and knowledge of patterns and processes are limited in Years 3-6.
- 117 Improvement is satisfactory. There is a planned scheme for developing the knowledge and skills of the subject from Years 1 to 6. However, this lacks progressive development of understanding, for instance of how physical and human features impact on the locality. As a result pupils do not achieve expected levels.

- 118 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2 use is made of non-fiction and storybooks to help pupils understand the different lives led by people in different parts of the world. Teaching is well organised and good use is made of questioning to allow pupils to develop their understanding. Good use is made of video to enable pupils to develop their observation. In Years 3 – 6 pupils make use of local maps to contrast localities. Pupils make an environmental study of the local nature reserve and in Year 6 learn about the life of a river. Pupils enhance their studies by a field trip in Year 6. Only limited use is made of information and communications technology and this is insufficient to challenge pupils.
- 119 Co-ordination is satisfactory, although the role of the co-ordinator is under-developed. There is enough guidance to allow teachers to follow a series of geographical activities. However, there is not enough guidance on the expectations of pupils and the development of fieldwork, mapping skills and use of secondary sources of information across the age range.

HISTORY

- 120 The standards of attainment of pupils in history at the age of eleven are below those expected of pupils of a similar age. The standards attained by pupils at the age of seven are in line with those expected. The standards attained are due to the effective teaching in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3-6 skills in the use of chronology, use of evidence and research are not developed to match the age and abilities of the pupils.
- 121 By the age of seven pupils understand that changes have taken place over time in the ways in which people live by looking at pictorial evidence. They know that transport in the past was different because they have gained evidence for photographs, pictures and artefacts. They recognise some features of a seaside town in Victorian times and recognise that some things change whilst others stay the same. They know about the Great Fire of London and understand how the events unfolded over a short space of time.
- 122 By the age of eleven pupils understand how life was different in Victorian times. They collect information about different aspects of Victorian society. They recognise the significance of the railway in standardising time. They know about the attitudes towards crime and punishment in the period.
- 123 Pupils are interested and well motivated. They are polite and well prepared when responding to visiting speakers. This comes from the good relationships that exist between teachers and pupils in the school.
- 124 The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Use is made of visiting speakers to enhance the teaching of topics on the Anglo-Saxons and Victorians. Pupils begin to investigate comparative values of objects and understand that barter was used before the introduction of coinage. Well planned teaching helps pupils in collecting and ordering their thoughts to produce structure writing about clothes, home life and law and order in Anglo-Saxon times. Language work, both spoken and written is developed satisfactorily, although the use of information and communications technology is less so. The extension of literacy skills in analysing printed books and material from the Internet would improve pupils' research skills and help them to produced longer and more structured written work.
- 125 The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The guidance given to teachers ensures that chronology, the use of evidence and research skills are used to support the knowledge gained by pupils. However, insufficient guidance as to the levels expected of pupils at different ages means that pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 126 Standards of work are in line with those expected of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 but remain below those expected of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. The improved provision for the subject, a well-resourced computer suite and co-ordinated planning are ensuring that standards continue to rise as pupils have structured access to the available technology. In addition to the suite, each classroom has two computers, making a total of forty-two machines throughout the school. Pupils have too few opportunities to use their improving ICT skills to support their learning in other subject areas and too few opportunities to develop independent working habits using the available computers.
- 127 Pupils in Year 1 are able to use a combination of programs to create colourful and imaginative pictures in the style of the artist Mondrian. All the pupils are able to improve their understanding of the programs being used and many produce a colour-printed record of their work despite only two computers being available. Year 5 pupils build upon previous work interrogating a database concerned with birds, their characteristics and habits. The pupils are trying to use the database to identify the range of birds which demonstrate two similar characteristics such as 'live in woodlands' and 'eat insects'. The majority of pupils manage to learn the techniques required to use the database. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and the co-operative nature of the pupils and the good use of non-teaching support ensure that these pupils make good progress.
- 128 The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some examples of good teaching particularly in Key Stage 1. Not all teachers are fully aware of the capabilities of the technology and the range of available resources but they have all received some quality training and are all gaining in confidence. Teachers plan their work effectively, provide pupils with clear objectives and appropriate support material. Teachers' good class management skills ensure that pupils collaborate effectively and improve their technical skills. Where the teaching was less successful the pupils were not fully aware of the task and what was required of them. The layout of the suite means that pupils backs are to the teacher but the projector and interactive board can be used to good effect to ensure all pupils are shown clearly what they have to do and exemplar material can be demonstrated effectively. High attaining pupils would benefit from more challenging activities and independent learning strategies and all pupils would benefit from further opportunities to take part in simulations and the use of control technology.
- 129 The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure improved provision of hardware has been supported by shared, cohesive planning and the availability of suitable software to support pupils' learning. Technical support is demanding of his time but a parent governor provides valuable help in this area. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to monitor teaching and share good practice. There is also an awareness of the importance of improving formal assessment opportunities and in tracking pupils so as to raise standards further. Pupils were not seen using computers at break-times and staff did not always take opportunities to use the technology to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. An example of this was seen in science lessons where pupils were taking their pulse rates before and after exercise. Results could have been recorded on a spreadsheet and the data used to produce a variety of graphs for the pupils to study and compare.

MUSIC

- 130 Standards achieved by pupils at the age of seven and eleven are in line with national expectations. Improvements have come through lessons which are better planned, well-

resourced, taught in a specialist room and with pupils having access to a wider range of musical experiences both within the classroom and through a range of extra-curricular activities.

- 131 Pupils in Year 1 were observed exploring the variety of sounds that can be made from a range of instruments both tuned and untuned. They participated in a challenging warm up activity enabling them to use their voices and relate the song to work covered in art and science. The pupils kept good time, were able to perform the hand actions and sing in tune. They used the instruments to demonstrate rhythm, pitch and dynamics. All the Key Stage 2 pupils participated in a singing session led by the music co-ordinator. This new venture, aiming to support the pupils' music lessons gave pupils the opportunity to sing in large numbers, improve their techniques of breathing, posture and voice control and enjoy music making. The staff were all very supportive and the singing was enthusiastic, loud and joyful. The session included music from Africa, singing in harmony and unaccompanied singing.
- 132 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and in line with their peers. Many of these pupils discover opportunities to succeed in music and dance which improves their self-confidence and enhances their self-esteem. The opportunities to work in groups, learn a specialist vocabulary, compose, perform and express themselves in a range of ways other than reading and writing extends their learning experiences.
- 133 Teaching was always at least satisfactory with examples of good teaching at both key stages. Throughout the school the teaching strengths include:
- the effectiveness of the teachers' planning ensuring a good range of progressive, challenging activities involving all the pupils.
 - class management which focused pupils' attention on the task of learning and minimised any time lost.
 - good use made of the range of resources for listening to music and undertaking simple musical compositions.
- 134 The use of the local music service to teach brass lessons to twenty pupils each week and the development of a brass ensemble together with a thriving choir and the chance to listen to live music provided by Dudley Live Music ensure pupils have opportunities for music making and appreciation. There are still too few opportunities for pupils to compose, perform and evaluate structured pieces within curriculum time but planning indicates that this area is to be covered more fully in the near future.
- 135 The subject is well co-ordinated by a talented and enthusiastic teacher, who is not a music specialist. She has a clear vision of the direction music should take at Wren's Nest and is aware of the need for using information technology more effectively both to increase assessment opportunities and to help pupils research compose and 'mix' musical compositions. She appreciates the value of sharing good practice with her less confident colleagues working with pupils and staff throughout the school motivating them and leading by example. The school participates in a range of musical festivals throughout Dudley and makes effective use of the local music services.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 136 During the inspection it was possible to observe only limited aspects of the curriculum with Key Stage 1 pupils observed in dance and gymnastics and Key Stage 2 pupils seen swimming, playing small team games and developing gymnastic sequences. Overall at the end of both key stages the standards are in line with national expectations. Pupils with

special needs achieve well and there are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

- 137 Year 2 pupils learn the complex dance movements of a South American dance style effectively and respond well to demonstrations by the teacher. They evaluate each other's performances and try a range of strategies to modify and improve their work. Year 1 pupils show good understanding of the value of a warm up in their movement lesson and build upon work covered in earlier lessons. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 benefit well from individual attention to improving stroke technique at the local swimming pool where most of the pupils show confidence in the water. By the age of 11, games skills are improving and pupils are beginning to show tactical awareness in small-side games and they pass with greater accuracy. Pupils know the value of exercise and the importance of warming up, cooling down and stretching out. Science lessons on pulse rate and the effect of exercise help reinforce their understanding. A large number of pupils were seen taking part in after-school activities including football, netball and multi activities. These sessions were structured and improved basic techniques and unit skills such as defending and attacking.
- 138 Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Two-fifths of all the lessons were good and one lesson was unsatisfactory with the remaining lessons satisfactory. Throughout the school the strengths include:
- planning that includes warm-ups, builds upon previous work, contains structured practices and allows for pupils of differing abilities to participate effectively.
 - effective use of pupil and teacher demonstration to show strategies for improving performance.
 - good management of pupils and consistent application of behaviour strategies that ensure pupils focus on the tasks and time is not wasted.
- 139 Unsatisfactory elements in teaching occurred when management of pupils was poor and lessons were slower with insufficient challenge, particularly for the more able pupils. The pupils generally responded well to the lessons and enjoyed the work and made considerable efforts to improve their performances and participate fully.

- 140 Management of the subject is good. The new co-ordinator has a clear strategy for continued improvement and she is beginning to match the resources to the needs of the pupils. Planning is consistent and monitored and the policy and schemes of work are being reworked to improve the quality of teaching and learning and secure an appropriate curriculum for the pupils at the school. Areas for improvement include more formal assessment strategies and the use of information and communication technology to support teaching and recording.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 141 The previous inspection noted that standards in religious education were average for pupils at age seven but were below average for pupils at age 11. Inspection shows that this position has now improved and attainment, which has remained in line with expectations for pupils aged seven and is now also in line for pupils at age 11. Several reasons account for this improvement but it is most notably due to the improvement in the quality of teaching. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Boys and girls and pupils with special educational needs all make satisfactory progress as does the small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language.
- 142 Pupils in Years 1 show that they have good knowledge of Judaism and can talk about aspects of that religion's worship. They are able to suggest that a harvest picture was taken in a church because of the presence of a cross and can give reasons why people want to give thanks for a successful harvest. Older pupils in Year 2 make a study of festivals and celebrations and look at social and moral questions such as making choices and the impact of bullying. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 develop these themes to greater depth and look in detail at the insides of places of worship. They widen their knowledge of major world religions. They develop their knowledge of the Bible and consider incidents in the life of Christ such as the feeding of the five thousand.
- 143 Teaching was observed on four occasions. Half the lessons were satisfactory and half the lessons were good. The strengths in teaching lay in the obvious commitment to the subject that was displayed and the planning and preparation that went into lessons. Teachers were skilled in asking questions and so pupils were encouraged to review what they had learned and to apply this, where appropriate, to the work in hand. More use could be made of pupils' developing English skills by restricting the use of worksheets and encouraging more recording by pupils of what they have learned. Teachers show good understanding of the needs and abilities of pupils in their classes and this can be seen in the way that they encourage others to be patient as pupils try hard to formulate an answer. Teachers also link the spiritual aspects of assembly into their lessons and do well to reinforce that aspect of the collective act of worship. Because relationships are good pupils show themselves to be interested and willing participants in their learning.
- 144 The co-ordinator has only recently become responsible for the management of the subject but has made a good start. She is enthusiastic and has the ability to see that progress is continued. Her priorities for the future are appropriate and she recognises the need to develop a uniform system of assessment for the subject in the future. The subject is well resourced but thought should be given to extending the use of resources in the field of information and communication technology.