

INSPECTION REPORT

St James's CE Primary School
Wollaston
Stourbridge

LEA area:Dudley

Unique Reference Number: 103851

Headteacher:Miss E.A.Penn

Reporting inspector:
Mrs Stephanie Cook
14842

Dates of inspection:29th November – 3rd December, 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706688

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school	Infant and Junior
Type of control	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	4 - 11
Gender of pupils	Boys and girls
School address	Kingsway Wollaston Stourbridge West Midlands DY8 4RU
Telephone number:	01384 818810
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Alan Millichip
Date of the previous inspection:	18 th March, 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mrs Stephanie Cook, RgI	Information and communication technology Art	Characteristics of the school Attainment and progress Teaching
Mrs Sheila Gurney, Lay Inspector		Attendance Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Support, guidance and pupils' welfare. Partnership with parents and the community Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
Mrs Jean Fisher, Team Inspector	Mathematics Design and technology History Equal opportunities	Curriculum and assessment
Mrs Wendy Crouch, Team Inspector	Under fives English	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
Mrs Janine Gibson, Team Inspector	Science Physical Education Special educational needs	Leadership and Management
Mr Malcolm Hayes, team Inspector	Geography Music	Efficiency

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MAIN FINDINGS

Children's achievements on entry to school vary from year to year. The school has the full spread of ability, and attainment this year is average. The majority of children have attended the school's social services pre-school unit.

What the school does well

- Standards in mathematics and science are high and good in English and information and communication technology. The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection and has a high commitment to raising standards.
- The teaching is good and often very good.
- There is very good provision for pupils' moral and social development.
- The partnership with parents and the local community is very good.
- The very good relationships are a strength of the school
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.

Where the school has weaknesses

- The school's development plan is not a cohesive document and does not allow the school to measure the success of its initiatives.

The school has many significant strengths. These strengths far outweigh the weaknesses. The weaknesses are few and specific. They will form the basis of the governing body's action plan, which will be sent to all parents and guardians of pupils attending the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has successfully addressed the issues that were raised in the previous inspection report.

- The school has effectively developed strategies to reduce levels of underachievement, evidenced by the significant improvement in attainment, pupils' progress and the quality of the teaching.
- The governing body has continued developing its role and responsibilities for managing and monitoring the curriculum. For example, governors are allocated responsibility for particular curriculum subjects and they regularly visit school to talk to staff and sometimes observe lessons.
- Financial controls have been established and the responsibilities of the governing body are clearly defined as are the powers delegated to the headteacher.
- Extensive systems to evaluate the effectiveness of expenditure on staffing and resources have been developed. For example, the use of non-teaching staff has been reviewed.
- The school now complies with the statutory requirements for registration, sex education, special educational needs and the school's policy for health and safety.
- The school has put in place safe systems for the beginning and end of the school day. The playground is supervised by staff. Entry times and the end of the school day have been staggered, and steps taken to avoid cars parking at the entrance.

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection and is very well placed to continue to maintain and make further improvements.

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	<i>Well above average</i>	<i>A</i>
English	B	B	<i>Above average</i>	<i>B</i>
Mathematics	A	A	<i>Average</i>	<i>C</i>
Science	A	A	<i>Below average</i>	<i>D</i>
			<i>Well below average</i>	<i>E</i>

These 1999 results show a marked improvement in the standards reached by eleven year-olds from the previous year in mathematics and science. Standards in English are not quite as good as last year as fewer pupils gained the higher Level 5. Inspectors' confirm similar levels of attainment currently, except in the aspects of listening and writing which are judged to be well above average. Standards in all three core subjects are much better than they were at the time of the previous inspection. The 1999 tests and teacher assessments for seven year olds are well above average in mathematics and in writing, and above in reading and science. These results are mirrored when compared to similar schools. The results for reading and science are not quite as high as they were last year in Key Stage 1. However, these results represent a big improvement since the last inspection, where there was considerable underachievement. Pupils make good progress in these three core subjects, particularly in mathematics and science.

Standards in information and communication technology are above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 and are in line with expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. Progress since the delivery of the new computer suite in September is very good in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Standards in history, singing and some aspects of physical education are above what would be expected for pupils at seven and eleven and they make good progress in these subjects. Attainment in the other foundation subjects of art, design and technology, geography, other aspects of music and physical education are typical for pupils at seven and eleven, and pupils make satisfactory progress.

On entry to school, children's attainment is average. By the time they are five they achieve beyond the expectations of the national programme in all areas of learning except in art in the creative area of learning. They make good progress in all areas of learning except in the aspect of art in the creative area of learning where progress is satisfactory.

The school has analysed the previous test results and has set targets in these subjects. Target setting and tracking of pupils' progress are having a significant impact on raising standards.

The school has a very good capacity to continue to improve.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Good	Very good	Very good
Science		Very good	Very good
Information technology		Very good	Very good
Religious Education	Not inspected	Not inspected	Not inspected
Other subjects	Good	Good	Good

Teaching is satisfactory or better in ninety seven per cent of lessons. It is good or better in seventy four per cent of lessons and very good in thirty one per cent. It is excellent in five per cent of lessons. Three per cent of lessons are unsatisfactory. The teaching is marginally better in Key Stage 1. Examples of very good or excellent teaching are seen in many subjects and classes. The teaching of the under fives is good, except in the aspect of art in the creative area of learning, which is satisfactory.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good. The school is an orderly community and pupils behave very well nearly all of the time.
Attendance	Satisfactory. There is some non-attendance from a very few families. Pupils arrive at school on time.
Ethos*	A very positive ethos, with a caring and friendly atmosphere and a commitment to high achievement.
Leadership and management	The school is well managed and led by the headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy and senior staff. The governing body is very supportive, knowledgeable and fully involved in all aspects of school life.
Curriculum	Broad and well balanced. High priority is given to English, mathematics and science. Very good extra-curricular activities are provided. Assessment is good in English, mathematics and science. It is being reviewed in some of the other subjects such as design and technology.
Pupils with special educational needs	Pupils make good and often very good progress, particularly in the core subjects. The school provides very well for these pupils in the level of individual support and help given. Pupils' progress is regularly monitored against pupils' individual educational plans.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good provision for moral and social development and good provision for spiritual and cultural.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Generous support for teaching and support staff. Generally spacious accommodation and good resources for learning, particularly in information and communication technology.
Value for money	Very good.

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the School	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •School encourages parents to play an active part. •The school's values & attitudes have a positive effect. •School achieves a high standard of good behaviour. •School gives a clear understanding of what is taught. •School enables children to reach good standards. •Children like school. 	go without a snack.

The inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views. Inspectors' agree with parents that the school does not have enough male role models for pupils, but inspectors support the view that the school must employ the best candidate for any post. There is no evidence to suggest that pupils are rushed at lunchtimes. Inspectors' have no definite views on whether children need a snack before lunch. The school is to look into the possibility of providing milk for the younger children. The inspectors are happy with the school's procedures for handling complaints.

Key issues for action

The governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:

1. Produce a cohesive school development plan by:
 - a. listing priorities in order of importance
 - b. outlining precisely what the criteria is for success, for each initiative and priority
 - c. linking any staff training implications to each initiative
 - d. linking any financial costs to each initiative
 - e. outlining precisely what action is necessary and who is to be responsible
 - f. setting realistic timescales for the completion of each proposal.

In addition to this key issue, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Improve the teaching of art in Key Stage 1.
- Address more rigorously pupils' non-attendance.
- Consider the provision of a designated outdoor play area for the children under fives.
- Consider access for disabled pupils.
- Find ways to ensure that pupils with special educational needs do not miss vital parts of their lessons, particularly in science and physical education.
- Ensure that marking consistently informs pupils how to improve their work.
- Ensure texts are well matched to pupils' capabilities in all lessons, particularly for the lower attaining pupils.

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1 St. James's CE Primary School is situated in Wollaston, within a mile of Stourbridge on the edge of the West Midlands conurbation. It has 346 boys and girls on roll in the age range 4-11. Children are admitted to the Reception classes twice a year in September and January. At the time of the inspection nine pupils are under the age of five.

2 Pupils who attend the school mostly live within the immediate area and come from a mixture of council housing and homes that are privately owned. The proportion of high class social groups in the locality is well above average but there are pockets of deprivation. Just under 14 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average. There are 56 pupils on the school's special educational needs register, two of whom have a Statement of Special Educational Need. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school's intake represents the full ability range and attainment on entry to school is average. The average class size is 26.8

3 The school aims to provide children with a broad and balanced curriculum, which reinforces the Christian faith in the Anglican tradition and the importance of Christian values. The pursuit of excellence by everyone involved in the school underpins all that it does.

4 At St. James's:

The school aims to provide an active witness to the Gospel, where all can experience the love of Jesus Christ. We aim to celebrate and value the achievement and effort, which everyone contributes to school life thus enabling all to give of their best

Teaching and learning is given a high priority, our aim is to provide quality education whilst continuously striving for improvement and growth.

We aim to encourage pupils to have a positive self-esteem in an atmosphere where all feel valued.

1 Priorities this year in the curriculum are:

the successful management of the Dudley Grid for Learning initiative and use of all the associated hardware and software available in school.

The focus on writing skills and the adoption of a new reading 'scheme' to complement the Literacy Hour.

Making preparations for Curriculum 2000.

To reach the targets set.

5 Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage
for the latest reporting year:

Year	Boy	Girls	Tota
1999	23	29	52

National	Test/Task	Reading	Writing	Mathematic
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	22 (23)	23 (25)	23 (22)
	Girls	24 (31)	27 (33)	26 (31)
	Total	46 (54)	50 (58)	49 (53)
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	88 (93)	96 (98)	94 (90)
	National	77 (75)	81 (80)	84 (83)

Teacher	Assessments	English	Mathematic	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	22 (23)	23 (22)	23 (26)
	Girls	25 (30)	25 (32)	27 (32)
	Total	47 (53)	48 (54)	96 (58)
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	90 (90)	92 (92)	96 (98)
	National	81 (80)	85 (83)	86 (85)

¹ Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage for the latest reporting year:

Year	Boy	Girls	Tota
1999	32	22	54

National	Test Results	English	Mathematic	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	22 (22)	25 (18)	31 (22)
	Girls	20 (25)	17 (16)	20 (19)
	Total	42 (47)	42 (34)	51 (41)
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	78 (77)	78 (56)	94 (67)
	National	65 (63)	59 (62)	69 (68)

Teacher Assessments	English	Mathematic	Science	
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	19 (20)	26 (22)	29 (22)
	Girls	19 (22)	18(21)	18 (19)
	Total	38 (42)	44 (43)	47 (39)
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	70 (69)	81 (70)	87(64)
	National	65 (63)	65 (62)	71 (69)

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.8
	National comparative	5.6
Unauthorised absence	School	0
	National comparative	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	31
Satisfactory or better	97
Less than satisfactory	3

² Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

- 1 Attainment on entry to school this year is average. This is confirmed by the assessments made of children's attainment soon after they enter the school. By the time children are five, they are attaining beyond what would be expected for children of this age in language and literacy, mathematical and all the other areas of learning, except in the aspect of art in the creative area of learning. Standards are typical for children of this age in the aspect of art. Children are very well settled into class routines and make good progress in all but the aspect of art, where they make satisfactory progress. Children express themselves well in sentences, can follow print in books and write their own name. They can count to ten and beyond and know the names of simple shapes.
- 2 The results of the 1999 national tests for eleven year olds show that overall attainment in English is above the national average and when compared to similar schools. It is well above average in both mathematics and science compared to all schools nationally and when compared to similar schools. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when the percentage of underachievement by pupils was high.
- 3 Results of the 1999 tests and teacher assessments for seven year olds show that pupils achieve well above average results in writing and mathematics and when compared to similar schools. They are above average in reading and when compared to similar schools, and also above in science. Results in science were maintained from the previous year; there are no comparators available for similar schools. Reading results are not as good as last year where more pupils gained the higher Level 5.
- 4 Girls in Key Stage 2 perform better than boys in English. The school is aware of this and has introduced texts that will appeal to boys and teachers sometimes choose writing tasks that have particular interest for boys. The 1999 teacher assessments were similar to the test results.
- 5 Inspectors' views confirm the results of the 1999 tests. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are judged to be above in English, except in writing, which is judged to be well above and well above in mathematics, and science. Inspectors' confirm the well above average attainment in writing and mathematics and above average attainment in reading and science by the end of Key Stage 1. The implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are having a good effect on raising standards in English and mathematics.
- 6 Pupils' attainment in English is above average by the time they leave the school. It is well above in writing and listening. Pupils are confident and articulate speakers who can talk at length, giving detailed explanations and opinions. They listen very carefully and thoughtfully to their teachers and to each other when discussing their work. Pupils are fluent, accurate and expressive readers who have a good vocabulary and understanding of what they read. High attaining pupils read information from an encyclopaedia computer program and information on the Internet with ease and a high degree of comprehension. The quality of the written work is very good. Pupils' work is particularly well structured and written in an exciting and original way. Pupils' skills in using grammar, punctuation and spelling are good. They present their work very well and write neatly in pen using a cursive script. Most Year 6 pupils are confident about locating books using the Dewey system in the library and understand how to take notes.
- 7 By the end of Key Stage 1, standards in English are well above what would be expected in writing and listening, and above in reading and speaking. Pupils speak clearly, answer questions confidently and ask pertinent questions of their own. They listen very attentively. Pupils read fluently and with expression and are able to work out new words using a variety of methods. Pupils write at length and usually punctuate their work correctly. Work is neatly presented.

8In mathematics, pupils' attainment by eleven is well above national expectations. The majority of pupils are very good at finding patterns in numbers and continuing them. They have a very good understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages and work to four decimal places when adding and subtracting. Most pupils can organise their own work and apply their knowledge and mathematical skills well in solving real-life problems and are quick to answer mental arithmetic questions. At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is well above what would be typically expected for seven year olds. Most pupils have a very good understanding of place value, ordering and rounding numbers. They use a range of strategies to work out simple problems in their heads and have a very good knowledge of shapes and their properties. They gather information systematically when collecting data to record in block graphs or tables.

9By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in science is well above average. Most pupils have a very good understanding of fair tests and can apply what they know to new situations. They often make very good predictions about what will happen in an experiment and record their observations systematically, reaching reliable conclusions. They have a good factual knowledge of the topics they study. At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in science is above standards expected nationally. Pupils have a good knowledge of electrical circuits for their age and make good predictions and observations in their experiments. Pupils understand the properties of materials and can suggest what materials are suitable for different purposes.

10Standards in English, mathematics and science have significantly improved since the last inspection. They have much improved in Key Stage 2 where previously standards were judged unsatisfactory in a quarter of lessons in mathematics and in a third of lessons in science. Underachievement in science was also previously evident in Key Stage 1. Standards in English at the time of the last inspection were in line with national expectations. The present picture of well above and above average attainment represents at least good and often very good progress in these subjects. Since the last inspection the school has been committed to raising standards. It has analysed the previous test results, results of reading tests and has tracked pupils' individual progress. It has used the information from these analyses effectively to set targets in these subjects and to identify and fill any gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Individual targets are set for each pupil and these are entered in the reports to parents. Pupils know what their targets are and work hard to attain them. Since the last inspection, the school has made every effort to improve its results, by careful monitoring, improved planning and by the use of assessment. It has identified weaknesses in writing and successfully developed strategies to improve standards.

11In both key stages pupils make good progress in English. They make good progress in speaking because teachers provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to ask and answer questions, speak at length and engage in discussions with their peers in many lessons. Pupils make very good progress in listening because they nearly always listen attentively to their teachers and to others. Progress in reading and writing is good and often very good in writing because the teaching is likewise. Pupils' very positive attitudes towards their learning greatly aids their progress. The implementation of the Literacy Hour is successful. This together with teachers' thorough planning and high expectations of what pupils can achieve all positively impact upon the progress pupils make.

12Progress in mathematics is very good. It is particularly good in mental arithmetic and in the developing of mental strategies for problem solving. The quality of the teaching, the very effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, the increased focus on investigative work, the emphasis on mental arithmetic and the developing of mental strategies, plus the setting of the older pupils in ability groups is having a profound effect on raising standards and accelerating pupils' rate of progress. Pupils' achieve high standards in numeracy.

13Progress in science is good and often very good. Pupils are building up their scientific knowledge and skills systematically and are experimenting for themselves. They are developing ways of recording their findings in a variety of different ways. Since the last inspection a new scheme of work has been adopted, a focus on practical investigations and the school has introduced a policy on effective learning and guidance on effective teaching. These developments have had a positive impact on raising standards and increasing the rate of progress.

14The amount and range of homework for pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, aids their progress considerably. Parents' involvement in hearing their children read and the topic work undertaken by the older pupils, for instance, the work on the Tudors positively influences progress.

- 15 English and mathematics are used very effectively in other subjects. Teachers take every opportunity to promote English across the curriculum. It is a particular feature of work in information and communication technology. Pupils use their mathematical knowledge and understanding well in other subjects. For example, in geography, they measure the speed and flow of rivers and calculate sunrise and sunset times in science.
- 16 Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is above national expectations by the time they are eleven. Pupils are very competent at sending e-mails to their friends and in surfing the Internet for information. They confidently use a publishing package to produce newspaper accounts and as a matter of course, incorporate pictures from a variety of sources. Year 6 pupils produce exciting presentations complete with sound and special effects using a multi-media software program. They are competent at using the mouse and their keyboard skills are satisfactory. Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national expectations. They use the mouse to drag and click on icons with reasonable dexterity and operate programs effectively. They can log-on and off the network and some can save their work. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress over time. Pupils mostly make very good progress in lessons because the teaching is very good, and provides opportunities for pupils to learn from their own mistakes and to experiment for themselves. Pupils have made a great deal of progress in Key Stage 2 since the arrival of the new computer suite in September.
- 17 Standards in history are above what are normally expected for pupils of seven and eleven and progress is good. Pupils have a good knowledge of the periods of history they study and how historical evidence is gained. Pupils' progress is enhanced by the many opportunities provided for pupils to work with artefacts and gain first hand experience. Standards are above what would be expected in singing and in games, and dance in Key Stage 1, and progress is good. Work is broadly in line with expectations at the end of both key stages in art. Pupils' progress is satisfactory over time but in two lessons it was unsatisfactory. Progress is limited when pupils do not have opportunities to experiment and explore different media for themselves and fill in with collage materials teacher drawn shapes. Standards in both key stages in geography, design and technology, music and gymnastics and dance in Key Stage 2 are satisfactory. Progress is satisfactory overall in geography, design and technology, other aspects of music and physical education in both key stages. Progress in gymnastics is good when pupils are encouraged to move with precision and a good degree of muscle tension, such as when pointing their toes and extending a 'stretch'. In dance pupils make better progress when working silently to improve their performances.
- 18 The overall rate of progress in all subjects is at least satisfactory throughout both key stages. It is often good and sometimes very good in the core subjects.
- 19 Pupils with special educational needs make good and often very good progress towards the targets set for them in the individual education plans, particularly when withdrawn for extra help individually or in small groups. Progress is regularly and accurately monitored, and targets are adjusted accordingly. This means that these pupils always build on their learning and do not stand still. They make good progress in the core subjects and in information and communication technology. In the remaining foundation subjects, progress is similar to that of the rest of the pupils.
- 20 Different cohorts of pupils contain the full range of abilities but in some classes the proportion of higher attaining pupils is above average.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

- 21 Pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour, courtesy, consideration and social development are all very good and are among the school's many strengths. Occasionally they are excellent.

22 Children under five come willingly to school and adjust well to its work and routines. They are confident and are eager to learn. They remember to raise their hands before answering, share toys fairly and take turns in their play. They take responsibility for themselves, for example, when getting dressed and undressed for physical education lessons. Pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are keen to learn and show mature attitudes to their work. Pupils show interest, are eager to answer questions and ask their own, read their work out loud and enjoy discussing what they do. In many lessons pupils are totally engrossed in their learning. They concentrate for long periods of time, persevere and show a pride in their work however high the demands. Pupils are competent at researching information for themselves using the library catalogue system to locate a text, and understand well how to search for information using the contents, index and glossary pages. Throughout the school pupils' mature, confident and conscientious attitudes make a significant impact on the quality of their learning. Pupils are nearly always well behaved and the school is a very orderly community. Pupils take a pride in their work and handle books and resources carefully. There have been no exclusions during the last twelve months. Bullying is rare and the school has good procedures to deal with any isolated incidents. Parents are very pleased with the values the school promotes and pleased with the pupils' behaviour.

23 Relationships throughout are very good. All pupils feel that they are respected and they in turn respect adults in the school. Pupils are invariably polite, courteous and friendly and are keen to volunteer, for example, to send the inspector an e-mail. Pupils are tolerant and supportive of each other, for example, when commenting about each other's art work and presentations of work on the Second World War. Boys and girls work very well together and when working groups or in pairs, collaborate and generate a high level of discussion. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into school and these pupils show positive attitudes to their learning.

24 Pupils, particularly in Year 6, are encouraged to take on responsibilities and they do so willingly and reliably. They help with assemblies, undertake duties in the office, act as librarians, help the younger children in the playground and regularly help Year 2 pupils with their reading. Pupils are given the responsibility to elect the house captains and Key Stage 2 classes each have an elected member on the playground committee. Responsibilities are not confined to the oldest children and the school prospectus outlines how these are developed from year to year. For example this year, Year 2 children, were in charge of the poppy day collection. Pupils respond well to these responsibilities, taking pride in doing a good job.

25 Pupils are developing considerable independence in their learning. For example, they plan their own scientific investigations, devise their own hockey games and explore the Internet to find information. They show initiative in their social development. They give generously to a range of charities and often suggest which causes they wish to support, for example the Kosova crisis and the Blue Peter appeal. During the inspection a boy approached the headteacher with the suggestion that they should do a time capsule to celebrate the Millennium. Pupils show very good personal development, which is a direct consequence of the caring and supportive ethos of the school and the quality of encouragement they receive. Many pupils are involved in music, drama, sporting and extra curricular activities all of which help to give them confidence and self-esteem. The older pupils are developing into socially aware and confident young people.

Attendance

26 Attendance is satisfactory and is slightly above the national average. Unauthorised absence is negligible and well below national figures. The vast majority of pupils arrive punctually and lessons start on time. The school has maintained its satisfactory attendance since the last inspection. There is some non-attendance of pupils from a very few families. This non-attendance negatively affects pupils' progress.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

27The overall quality of teaching is good. It is satisfactory or better in ninety seven per cent of lessons, of which nearly three-quarters are good or better. A quarter of lessons are very good and five per cent of lessons are excellent. Teaching is unsatisfactory in three per cent of lessons. The teaching of mathematics, science, history and information technology is very good. The teaching of most other subjects (English, physical education, geography, design and technology, music in Key Stage 2) is good overall. The teaching of art is satisfactory in Key Stage 2 but is unsatisfactory in two out of three lessons in Key Stage 1. The teaching is at least good for the under fives in all aspects of learning except the aspect of art in the creative area of learning, where it is satisfactory. It is very good in the teaching of personal and social education where staff set very good examples for the children and have high expectations of children's behaviour. The teacher presents learning in a lively and motivating way and is skilful in her questioning. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace but opportunities for children to freely explore their own ideas in art are not frequent enough. No judgements are made on the teaching of design and technology and geography at Key Stage 1. Examples of very good or excellent teaching are seen in the majority of classes and in many subjects. The teaching of the National Literacy Strategy is good and for the National Numeracy Strategy is very good. The teaching is marginally better in Key Stage 1. The good teaching greatly contributes to pupils' standards of attainment and rate of progress.

28The quality of teaching is very much better than it was in the previous inspection. It was judged to be unsatisfactory previously in almost a quarter of lessons. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in both key stages and in all subjects except history and music. The significant improvement in teaching is because the school has carefully and effectively monitored teaching and learning, and has greatly improved its planning to ensure that what is learnt in one class or year is built upon in the next. Teachers now plan together where pupils are of a similar age, so that both classes receive the same content for lessons. Teachers nearly always ensure they are very clear in their lesson plans, precisely what they want pupils to learn and how they are to achieve their aims. This is a strength of the school's planning and allows teachers to evaluate what they have taught.

29Most teachers have at least a secure knowledge in all subjects of the National Curriculum, and several are very knowledgeable about their subjects, for example, in mathematics, information and communication technology, physical education and history. Some teachers in Key Stage 1 lack expertise in the teaching of art. Most teachers plan work that is well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils and often it is very challenging. Occasionally in some subjects such as information and communication technology the texts (on screen) are too demanding for the lower attaining pupils. Teachers are particularly skilful in their questioning, and make every effort to ensure that questions are targeted to individual pupils.

30Teaching is at least good and often very good for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils, when withdrawn from lessons to do extra language work, are skilfully taught by the specialist assistant who constantly reinforces, in a variety of ways, what is being learnt. Pupils are well supported in classes, often by classroom assistants, and teachers ensure that work is well matched to pupils' individual education plans and targets. Teachers and assistants are sensitive to the needs of these pupils and provide reassurance, encouragement and practical support where necessary. Support staff make a valuable contribution towards the good progress in learning made by these pupils.

31Teachers use every opportunity in lessons in nearly all subjects to improve pupils' reading and writing, and pupils' understanding and use of numbers. Lessons in history, geography and information and communication technology provide good opportunities for pupils to read for information, answer questions and write accounts, for example, in writing about the River Nile. In science pupils calculate sunrise and sunset times competently.

32 Teachers have high expectations of pupils' written work and its presentation. They expect pupils to think deeply about their answers to questions and often set challenging activities. For example, in a Year 2 history lesson pupils select Victorian artefacts and use their knowledge of life in these times, from a recent visit to a museum, to re-enact scenes and jobs from this period. This challenged the pupils to recall and apply all that they had previously learnt to the roles. Teachers usually give clear instructions, explanations and expositions. They plan interesting lessons. For example, pupils make exciting 'slide' presentations using a multi-media software package to demonstrate to another class, examine and try on everyday artefacts in history and investigate and measure pulse rates.

33 Classroom organisation is good. Teachers are very well prepared and make good use of a range of resources, including real items, for instance sweets in mathematics lessons, many historical artefacts such as uniforms from the Second World War and tableware designed by Clarice Cliffe. Teachers establish very good discipline with little apparent effort. On a very small number of occasions when teaching is not so stimulating and staff are less experienced at managing pupils, pupils become a little restless but pupils are quickly brought back to attention. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and teachers set time targets for pupils to achieve.

34 Very good relationships exist between staff and pupils, and a friendly atmosphere is created. Pupils consequently feel confident to ask questions, put forward their ideas and speak at length.

35 Teachers make effective assessments about the progress pupils make. In the best lessons, teachers make assessments of what pupils can do and use this information to decide the next step in their learning. At the end of some lessons teachers write down what pupils have achieved and which pupils need more practice and consolidation of ideas. This practice is good and ensures that work for the next lesson is specifically targeted towards individual pupils. Marking in all subjects and in most classes shows consistency in the comments, acknowledgements and rewards used, but there is less information of how pupils can improve their work. Pupils have targets set for them and they work to these detailed goals.

36 Homework makes an important contribution to pupils' learning. The reading diary provides an effective dialogue between home and school. Pupils read, learn their spellings and multiplication tables at home and often research for information, producing high quality booklets of their findings.

37 Where the teaching is satisfactory, as opposed to good, very good or excellent, lessons are not so interesting or stimulating and teachers allow too much chatter before bringing back pupils' attention. In the unsatisfactory lessons in art, teachers' subject expertise is lacking and they are not clear about what they want pupils to learn.

38 Classroom assistants provide good support for pupils, especially in information and communication technology and when supporting pupils with special educational needs, and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

The curriculum and assessment

39 The school provides a curriculum which is broad, balanced and relevant and successfully promotes pupils' intellectual, physical, moral, social and personal development. It has clearly agreed aims and policies that are supported by coherent schemes of work. The school meets the statutory requirement for all subjects of the National Curriculum and for Religious Education. It meets the requirements for pupils below compulsory school age. Since the last inspection, statutory requirements relating to registration, sex education, and the publishing of a health and safety policy have been addressed effectively. Personal, social and health education is well integrated into the curriculum. For example, health education is taught drawing on specialist help from outside the school, and sex education is taught through appropriate topics and themes, subject to parental consent. The liaison between the pre-school unit and the early years is very good and prepares children well for their entry to school. It also prepares pupils' well for the next stage of schooling, and liaison between it and the feeder schools is good.

- 40 Good subject policies are in place for all subjects and are supported by very good schemes of work based on the national recommendations. The schemes provide a clear framework for long and medium term planning. They enable the school to plan what is to be taught in each year group and to ensure that knowledge and understanding are built upon systematically each year. The curriculum for pupils under the age of five is firmly rooted in the nationally recommended areas of learning. There are many opportunities for children to play and choose their own activities, but there is no designated outdoor area for physical activities where children can use such equipment as wheeled toys. This does not detract from children's learning as the staff compensate by providing some opportunities for children to use the pre-school unit's outdoor space for this purpose. They also provide opportunities for physical development in physical education lessons.
- 41 The school allocates an appropriate amount of time to each subject. The time allocated to the teaching of literacy and numeracy is generous but entirely appropriate in its efforts to raise standards. The school plans to review the amount of time allocated to subjects early next year.
- 42 The effectiveness of the National Literacy Strategy is good and very good for the National Numeracy Strategy. The National Literacy Strategy is efficiently organised and good use is made of interesting texts to motivate pupils. Extra reading sessions are provided to ensure pupils get every opportunity to practice their reading and to understand what they read. The school's focus on writing is effective and pupils profit from this. The school was involved in the National Numeracy Strategy as a pilot school two years ago. This early involvement coupled with the teachers' willingness and commitment has contributed significantly, to the raising of standards. The governor who has taken on responsibility for mathematics is very much involved and knowledgeable. Both the governors and parents state that both of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have had a significant impact on pupils' learning and that good progress is made. In mathematics, in line with guidelines from the National Numeracy Strategy, pupils benefit from a greater emphasis on mental calculations. The setting of pupils according to their attainment is having a beneficial impact on their achievement in mathematics.
- 43 Most pupils have equal access to the school curriculum. The education the pupils receive is free from bias and discrimination and the school generally promotes fairness and equality effectively. Both boys and girls have full access to the complete range of activities within the school. Where pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn from classes, for individual or small group help their work is generally linked to that being undertaken in the classroom. Where they are withdrawn the same time each week, for example in practical activities in science, they sometimes miss vital aspects of the lesson. Pupils who are withdrawn for specialist music tuition usually are well briefed on their return and have time to make up what they have missed within the lesson. Currently, disabled pupils are unable to access the school due to the building being situated on two levels.
- 44 Pupils with special educational needs are carefully identified, and provision is very good. They have specific individual education plans which are tailored for their needs and progress is carefully monitored. The Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs is fully implemented. The support offered by staff and area agencies, both within classrooms and when pupils are withdrawn for language and spelling, is at least good and often very good. The school makes effective arrangements for pupils to move to the next stage of provision when necessary. Annual reviews for pupils with Statements of special educational needs are carried out regularly and are suitably recorded.
- 45 Curricular planning is of high quality, for instance in the variety and range of planning. The school has established a clear framework within which teachers can plan effectively. Subject policies, agreed by the staff, reflect the school's aims. Schemes of work, written by the co-ordinators in consultation with the whole staff, have relevant objectives clearly linked to the National Curriculum. Teachers base their weekly and daily plans on the subject schemes of work and this detailed planning is usually highly effective. Planning systems are consistently applied and supported by good levels of collaboration between staff. Teachers plan together in year groups to ensure consistency of work for pupils of the same age. Governors are now involved in monitoring the curriculum; they are allocated an important curriculum subject in which they take a keen interest, and they are knowledgeable about the developments in the subject. Co-ordinators play an active role in monitoring their subject areas and scrutinise and monitor colleagues' plans and work on a regular basis. They are given time to support and monitor classroom practice as part of the school's in-service development. The

school plans for cross-curricular issues and is currently planning Industrial and Economic Awareness, Careers, Citizenship, and Health education programmes. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

46Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, all of which are well supported by the pupils and taught by many enthusiastic staff. For example, the science, craft, dance, drama clubs, and the several information and communication technology clubs both for pupils and parents, make a high quality contribution to the curriculum. A daily library club gives pupils good opportunities to enjoy and explore the facilities of their library. It also teaches them valuable reading skills such as finding fiction and non-fiction texts for specific purposes and locating appropriate information. Seasonal physical activities, all competitive, such as football, netball, cross-country, athletics, and cricket in summer take place regularly after school. Years 3, 4 and 5 have swimming lessons and all of these pupils are able to swim at least 25 yards by the time they leave. Relevant educational visits enhance the curriculum for all its pupils. For example, visits to Hartlebury Castle and Harvington Hall enrich the history provision; research into animal habitat at a farm provides appropriate and effective scientific stimulus for the younger pupils and a study of the village of Arley by Year 4 pupils supports their research skills in geography. An annual residential visit by Year 6 pupils to an outdoor pursuits centre contributes well to the requirements of the physical education curriculum. Visitors such as theatre groups and the Tudor dancers offer valuable first-hand experiences to the pupils, and visitors representing some of the major world faiths are well represented.

47Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are good. Recently introduced formal assessment procedures for English and science are good, and practices and procedures throughout the school in mathematics are very good. Formal assessment occurs regularly through written testing, such as Qualifications and Curriculum Authority tests, and in some subjects such as history, teachers assess at the end of a topic. Half termly assessments in other subjects, such as design and technology are being reviewed. The school intends to use the government's assessments when these become available. Careful assessment is made of pupils' test results on entry and these indicate that the majority of pupils have average levels of attainment. At the end of the reception year, pupils are again assessed to find out the rate of progress made. This practice of assessing the progress pupils make and acting upon the results continues regularly throughout the pupils' time in school.

48Good use is made of the results of the national tests and teacher assessments. For example, the pupils' answers to specific questions in the national tests are analysed to identify areas that need more attention and to identify what individual pupils need to do to improve. Realistic but demanding targets are set for the school, classes and for individual pupils, and progress towards these targets is carefully tracked. Informal day to day assessment of what has been taught and the subsequent recording of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, for example, in mathematics and English provides a detailed picture of their attainment and progress. Pupils with special educational needs are regularly assessed against their specific learning targets in order to decide upon the next stage for development.

49Recording of pupils' work is good, as mentioned in the previous inspection. Achievements, test results and diagnostic exercises are recorded and provide an accurate consistent and comprehensive picture of each pupil's achievements and firm evidence of their progress in the core subjects. The pupils' record files contain useful information. They include pupils' test results at the point of entry, and, along with copies of annual reports to parents, show pupils' attainment and progress. In response to the previous inspection, other assessment evidence, such as samples of pupils' written work augments these records, which have been assessed and collated against National Curriculum criteria. The inconsistency in the quality of marking of pupils' work, evident during the last inspection, has improved.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

50Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall, including that for children under five. The school has continued to develop its provision and make improvements since the last inspection.

51The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. In assemblies there are many opportunities to pray and to reflect on the place of Jesus in the lives of people from the community, while candles in one assembly are used successfully to show similarities between Christian and Hindu symbols. Pupils have regular opportunities to visit the local church and also attend other places of worship in connection with their lessons in religious education. The Christian church year is followed week by week and during the inspection pupils enjoyed lighting the first candle for Advent and to ponder on the thoughts suggested. In lessons across the

curriculum there are occasions where pupils show awe, particularly at paintings, as when Reception children gazed in wonder at Van Gogh's 'Starry Night', at the power of technology and the logic of mathematics in the circle patterns observed by Year 6 pupils.

52The provision for moral development is very good. Pupils are very well taught to tell right from wrong. They are very well aware of what constitutes good behaviour and nearly always follow the school's code of conduct 'to the letter'. Pupils regularly consider values such as honesty and fairness in 'circle time,' and moral dilemmas such as the effects of tourism and mountaineering on the environment, are discussed in lessons. Representatives from classes in Key Stage 2 also belong to a playground committee which meet to consider the interests of all pupils in the way play is organised and run. Staff are all alert to pupils who experience small incidents where they feel unjustly treated, and make timely interventions to redress or discuss any perceived unfairness.

53Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The whole school ethos is very effective in promoting pupils' social development. Staff set very good examples for pupils to follow. Pupils are all valued for their own qualities which helps to create the very good relationships which are a strength of the school. Pupils are frequently encouraged to work in a variety of formal and informal groups. Besides being active class members they take part enthusiastically in competitive house teams, co-operate in working groups in lessons and older pupils share books with younger ones in paired reading sessions and care for them when going out as a school party. Older pupils also learn the value of teamwork through their annual residential visit. Pupils are expected to be helpful, courteous and polite to visitors. All pupils are given opportunities to accept responsibilities, in the early years for clearing away, picking up coats which fall from pegs and simple organisational tasks. By Year 6 pupils respond responsibly to duties such as helping in assemblies and at lunchtime, and becoming librarians. When pupils take initiative, this is actively encouraged both in work and other aspects of life. Reception pupils, for instance, thought out their own mathematics task and older Key Stage 2 pupils suggest worthy charities to support.

54The school makes good provision for pupils' cultural development. There is a good range of useful opportunities for pupils to appreciate different cultures. Music to match the theme of assemblies, including Hindu music for the Divali assembly, is played daily for entry to and from the hall. Regular visitors introduce pupils to different cultural traditions such as the peripatetic tutors' brass band concert. The work of well-known artists is appreciated in art lessons, currently Clarice Cliff, L.S. Lowry and Seurat. The English curriculum includes consideration of works of William Shakespeare and Charles Dickens. Pupils experience English and Tudor dancing and when chances occur take part in 'One World Week' at a local shopping centre. Pupils also enjoy many visits to places of geographical and historical interest to support learning in those subjects, such as this term's trips to Harvington Hall for insights into Tudor life and to Arley to study a village. Besides awareness of different faiths through religious education, pupils have recently received visitors from abroad and tasted food from different cultures in design and technology lessons.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

55The school makes good provision for pupils' support, guidance and welfare. The school provides a caring environment in which pupils can learn, and this has a positive effect on their attitudes, progress and attainment. Parents report that their children enjoy coming to school, and pupils agree.

56Teaching and support staff relate very well to pupils and show a high level of interest in their progress. The school carefully tracks pupils' individual progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and sets targets for pupils to improve. Progress in mathematics is very well monitored and in the other subjects it is at least satisfactory and often good, with pupils' achievements and any concerns carefully recorded. The needs of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs are carefully assessed and the quality of the support they are given both in the classroom and when withdrawn is good and often very good. All the staff are aware of the nature of pupils' specific educational, behavioural and medical needs as identified on the school's register and very effective procedures are in place to ensure their academic progress and general well-being. The school makes very effective use of its links with services such as the Local Education Authority's learning support service and local Health Authority. There are only a few pupils from different cultural and religious backgrounds but they are well supported by the staff, who quickly realize when they need help.

57A positive behaviour policy is in place based firmly on the principles of encouragement and reward and they are both very effective. Very good behaviour is both expected and achieved. Bullying is rare, but any incident is investigated promptly and dealt with firmly. Parents are made aware of the school's code of conduct and

widely approve of the very good standards achieved. The school does not tolerate racial harassment.

- 58The recording of attendance meets statutory requirements and is well monitored. The histories of the few pupils with poor attendance are well known to teachers. The education welfare officer is rarely needed, but there is evidence that her intervention improves individual attendance rates.
- 59Parents of children under five receive good information about the school and have opportunities to discuss arrangements and meet the staff. Children under five are helped by staff to settle quickly to school routines. Transfer from the pre-school unit into the Reception class is very carefully managed to ensure children settle in happily and easily. Similarly pupils transferring to the main receiving secondary school are well supported through making visits, for example, to experience laboratory work, and through secondary teachers visiting St. James. Personal, social and health education helps to enhance pupils' self-esteem. It is enhanced by the visit of the Life Education Caravan which provides information on aspects of health education appropriate to the ages of the children. Older pupils are made fully aware of the dangers of the misuse of drugs. Pupils are well known to the staff who show them respect, care and concern. They are given great encouragement to take responsibility for their own learning, such as by carrying out research on the Internet. A strong Christian ethos pervades the school and pupils are given clear moral guidance.
- 60Procedures for child protection are satisfactory and a clear policy is in place. Both teaching and key non teaching staff are trained.
- 61First aid provision is good and four members of staff hold qualifications. Procedures for fire drill are carefully documented and the school can be evacuated in three minutes. Risk assessment and the monitoring of health and safety are undertaken regularly.
- 62The school has improved provision since the last inspection. It meets the legal requirement to include a statement about sex education in the school prospectus and has improved the congestion on entry and exit by the pupils at the beginning and end of the school day. It has provided supervision of the playground, staggered entry and dispersal times as well as doing everything possible to deter cars from parking near the entrance.

Partnership with parents and the community

- 63The school has a very good partnership with its parents and relationships with the local community. That the parents support the work of the school was evident in the many positive comments included in the parents' questionnaires and appreciative comments at the parents' meeting.
- 64Parents feel welcome at St. James and they are happy with the information given to them. Parents of children under five are given good information before their children start school. Pupils' annual reports contain relevant and detailed information about pupils' progress and consultation evenings are very well attended. The school provides good information to parents through its newsletters, the 'Termly Times' produced with the pupils and in the curriculum information about what pupils will be studying each term. The governors' annual report to parents meets statutory requirements and keeps parents well informed of the year's developments and events. The school has a genuine open door policy, and parents feel that staff are approachable. Parents of children with special educational needs are often well involved with their child's education.
- 65Only a few parents help in school on a regular basis but parents feel encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school. The homework policy is shared with parents and homework diaries make parents aware of teachers' expectations and enable them to help their children. Drama productions and class assemblies are very well attended, with parents often taking time off work to attend. Parents have found the meetings held to explain the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, useful and informative. Parents say their children enjoy coming to school and both inspectors and pupils agree.

66The Parent Teacher Association is extremely active and successful in promoting both social and fund raising activities, which involve the parish and the community in general. Parents and friends are most generous in their support of the school. Last year the Association spent much of its funds on buying books but support was also provided for a wide range of projects from play equipment and furniture to subsidizing visiting drama groups and school visits. This extra provision greatly enhances pupils' educational experience. The strength of parents' interest in helping their children to learn is demonstrated by the recent special award given to seven parents who took part in Dudley College's Learning Together course. A further ten parents of children in Year 1 are now participating in the national 'SHARE' scheme which aims to demonstrate to parents how children can be helped at home. The school also runs a popular computer club for parents and children to learn skills together.

67Communication with the parents of pupils with special education needs is good and they are kept well informed of the review processes. Nearly all parents feel that the school makes the best of pupils' abilities and qualities and the inspection confirms this view. The school has taken appropriate action in providing in-service training for staff on teaching pupils with specific learning difficulties in response to concerns expressed by a parent.

68Links with the parish and the community are very strong. Children visit the church, welcome speakers and make a monthly contribution to the parish magazine. Visitors to assemblies establish further links. Most are Christians but during the inspection a member of the Hindu community led prayers after Year 1 had given a class assembly about the origins of Divali. Pupils have also visited a Hindu temple. Links with the social services pre-school unit are very good and it in turn links with the independent playgroup, which is located on the school site, and shares some of the school's facilities. The leader of the playgroup also runs the newly established 'After School' club thus strengthening the bond. School visits establish further links with the local community. Particularly effective has been a visit to Hartlebury Castle which gave Year 2 pupils an insight into Victorian kitchens. Year 3 pupils have a link with Dudley College where they go for a 'taster' day and are able to practice elementary plumbing, brick laying and carpentry skills. Pupils make bird boxes, some of which are sold to parents and friends. Pupils participate in local music festivals, and sporting links ensure co-operation with other local schools. The school gives generously to a range of national and international charities. Links with a building society who gave £200 paid for a well-known storyteller to enthral the pupils, positively benefits pupils' learning. This is an outward looking school whose many links with the local community and the wider world make a very positive contribution to pupils' attainment and their personal development.

69The school has maintained its partnership with parents and the very good links with the community.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

70The school is well led and managed. The headteacher has a very clear vision of how the school is to move forward and provides good leadership by recognising the strengths of the staff and managing them to create a dedicated and hard-working team. This results in a school that shares a common sense of Christian values and purpose with a strong emphasis on raising standards through a focus on good quality teaching and learning. These shared aims contribute effectively to creating the very good school ethos. The school is successful in meeting its stated aims of providing quality education and enabling pupils to achieve high standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the school's aims for providing quality education were not sufficiently met.

71Governors play a very important and valued part. They are totally committed to helping the headteacher and staff to raise standards, they understand their responsibilities and meet these very well. They take part in training to make sure that they keep abreast of national educational developments and have a very good understanding about these. They are closely involved in the life of the school. They have a very good overview of all aspects of the school's management, including the financial and staffing issues, target setting and national initiatives such as National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. There are governor representatives for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and for religious education and information technology. These governors regularly talk with staff about their allocated subject and sometimes observe lessons. Governors are closely involved in all aspects of school development and improvement, for example, three representatives join the senior management team in developing the School Development Plan and co-ordinators present overviews of their subjects at governors' meetings. This is a big improvement since the last inspection where governors were said to be not directly involved in development planning or in monitoring the work of the school. The role of the governors was a key issue previously.

72Governors understand the particular circumstances of the school and its pupils, and take these into account when setting targets for raising standards in national tests. They are well aware of their responsibilities towards pupils with special educational needs. The management and administrative systems for these pupils are very good and the co-ordinator for special educational needs is highly effective. School procedures fully reflect the requirements of the Code of Practice: the register of special educational needs is accurate and the records of identified pupils are well kept. Plans are in place to evaluate the success of the current policy in a number of specific areas during the current school year. The special educational needs governor is fully involved in the school's procedures and the issue regarding the absence of a named governor for this area, identified in the last report, has been addressed. There are times when a small minority of pupils are withdrawn from classes for additional literacy support when other subjects are taught, for example in science and physical education, and this denies their access to the full curriculum. The withdrawal of pupils from lessons, identified in the last report, has been addressed successfully for the most part as their needs are now met in literacy and numeracy lessons and, with the exception of the instances mentioned above, the school provides equal opportunities for pupils to learn and make progress in all curriculum subjects.

73The school's systems for monitoring teaching and the curriculum have been effective in improving the quality of education provided and the development of the curriculum since the last inspection. The new senior management team works well together to good effect, for example, by meeting with staff from the social services pre-school unit to ensure that planning to the nationally recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes enables the smooth transition of pupils to reception and by using the results of formal and informal tests to identify and target groups of pupils for extra support. Members of the team have been involved in monitoring provision, for example, the headteacher has monitored the teaching of the numeracy lesson, and the literacy hour has recently been monitored by the Key Stage 2 co-ordinator. Subject co-ordinators have a good understanding of their responsibilities as curriculum managers. Teachers with responsibilities provide good leadership for their colleagues when their subject is the focus for development, for example, the introduction of the new computer network and new software has been very successfully managed and is being used very effectively, as evidenced by the above average attainment in Year 6.

74The headteacher is dedicated to the school and the pupils. She ensures that parents have confidence in the school, maintains a high level of presence and is approachable to everyone. She also ensures that the school is managed well on a day-to-day basis and relationships between all those concerned with the school are very good. The headteacher is well informed about current national educational developments and is keen to see each of these being addressed successfully. Although standards in national tests are rising by the end of Key Stage 2, she is not complacent and continually seeks ways to raise these even further. She keeps governors well informed about important matters.

75Since the last report, the amount of checking and finding out about how well the school is doing has increased considerably and this has become much more systematic. National tests are analysed to find out how groups of pupils are doing and what the weaknesses in their attainment are, for example previous analysis of English results has led to the purchase of materials to match boys' reading interests and analysis of this year's results has revealed some variance between the writing abilities of girls and boys. Pupils' progress is efficiently tracked in English and mathematics.

76The school's development plan, which identifies relevant priorities, is agreed by the governing body, after consultation. The plan is broad and has strengths which include a review of the previous inspection action plan, the school's systems for evaluating its cost effectiveness and the rationale for current developments. The plan is based on a one-year innovation plan and a three-year maintenance plan but the format is not easy to follow and it is difficult to track developments. Identified priorities are statements of intent rather than clearly focused development targets and are not in a clear enough order of priority: some have inappropriate time scales. There are few initiatives that have success criteria so that the school can measure the effectiveness of its actions. Although costings are recorded they are not always clearly linked to actions to be taken. The school is aware that the plan lacks cohesiveness and is not entirely effective and has plans to revise the format in the future.

77The headteacher and governors have ensured that all the main weaknesses identified in the last inspection report have been addressed. The significant underachievement of pupils has been addressed and the high level of unsatisfactory teaching at the time of the last inspection has much improved. Statutory requirements relating to registration, sex education, special education needs and the school's policy for health and safety have been addressed. The school meets all statutory requirements. Financial controls that clearly define the responsibilities of the governing body, and the powers delegated to committees and to the headteacher have all been established. Additionally, the school has developed a range of systems to evaluate the effectiveness of expenditure on staffing and resources. The school has taken every effort to ensure there are safe systems at the beginning and end of the school day. Staff and pupils from Year 6 supervise the playground, the times of the beginning and end of the day are staggered for the younger pupils and parents are encouraged not to park near the entrance. Test results at the end of Key Stage 2 have risen and the school has been successful in meeting its stated aims of providing quality education and enabling pupils to achieve high standards.

78The school has made very good progress since the last inspection and is very well placed to continue to maintain and make further improvements.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

79The school is generously staffed with teachers and support staff. There is a good balance of experienced and comparatively recently qualified teaching staff. They are appropriately qualified to teach all the National Curriculum subjects, religious education and the under-fives. However, with only one male teacher and one other male member of the staff the boys have insufficient male role models. Staff are appropriately appointed on the principle 'of the best person for the job'. All staff have satisfactory job descriptions and the role of the subject co-ordinator is clearly defined. They monitor their subject effectively by looking at teachers' planning and pupils' work. Currently, because of staff absence, some subjects such as art lack the expertise of a co-ordinator to provide support to teachers who have limited subject knowledge. This has a negative impact on pupils' attainment and progress in the subject. Nursery nurses and classroom assistants are suitably experienced and usually efficiently deployed. On some occasions in the Literacy Hour assistants sit and listen during the oral part of the lessons when they could be used more effectively. The school's decision to allocate an assistant for information and communication technology lessons is very effective. In these lessons the assistant is very knowledgeable about the programs used and very effectively supports pupils in their learning.

The school secretary, the caretaker and the mid-day supervisors all contribute positively to the staffing team.

80 There are good induction procedures and newly qualified teachers feel well supported. They have opportunities to observe good teaching in other classes and this helps them to improve their own practice. Teacher appraisal is in abeyance on the advice of teachers' unions but staff have worthwhile annual staff development interviews with the headteacher. Teachers have received the necessary numeracy and literacy training, and a number of staff have attended courses on various subjects to meet their own and the school's developing needs. Effective training in some subjects, for example, design and technology are given in the classroom when the Local Education Authority advisory teachers teach a 'model' lesson. Particularly effective training has been given to staff in the use of new software and the new computer suite. Arrangements for staff development for special educational needs are very good and support assistants have received relevant training. Teachers and classroom assistants for pupils with special educational needs are supplied with much helpful material gained from the co-ordinator and Local Education Authority, to support teaching and learning.

81 The quality of the accommodation is good. The school is excitingly and interestingly laid out. Though the hall is on the small side for the number of children on roll, the school copes well, especially in assemblies when space is tight. Elsewhere rooms are of at least adequate size and most are spacious. There is a high standard of decoration, cleanliness and upkeep. The building, enhanced by many attractive displays, provides an interesting and stimulating learning environment. The new information technology suite is housed in a particularly attractive area dominated by a fine mural, depicting local trades, which was painted by students from Stourbridge Art School. The library offers a very pleasant area for study. The school has two small rooms which are used well by classroom assistants for focused teaching and learning activities with small groups of pupils. One of these rooms is particularly attractive and stimulating with suitable displays to assist learning. There are toilets suitable for use by disabled people but wheelchair access is unsatisfactory because of several short flights of steps. Outside, the school has many attractive features. There is good provision for games and some areas are set aside for quiet play. There is no separate playground designated for the under fives but, through good management, this does not detract from pupils' physical learning. An environmental area has been carefully planned and includes a pond. Another unusual feature is a thriving herb garden which, together with attractive planting and landscaping, combine to give a very pleasing impression. Overall the good quality accommodation and resources for learning have a positive affect on the standards attained.

82 The quality, quantity, range and accessibility of learning resources for children under five is good. Similarly in all other areas of the curriculum the quality, quantity, range and accessibility is at least good, except for art where it is satisfactory. Resources for information technology and mathematics are very good and are very well used. The library has a satisfactory range of books and provision is enhanced by making good use of the local schools' library service. The library is well organised and pupils make good use of the cataloguing and 'Dewey' classification system to locate information. Rising standards in reading are beginning to indicate a need for more high quality and challenging texts for pupils to read independently. There is an excellent range of learning resources for pupils with special educational needs for the use of all staff. The environmental area is a good additional resource for science lessons.

The efficiency of the school

83 The overall efficiency of the school is good. The efficiency of school administration is a particular strength. The school runs very smoothly and the day-to-day organisation and administrative procedures, including those for the school's finance, make a positive contribution to the school's very good ethos.

84 Financial planning and control are good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there was no limit on the level of expenditure on any one order or virement from one budget heading to another. Financial controls that clearly define the responsibilities of the governing body, the powers delegated to their subcommittees and to the headteacher have all been agreed. The school makes good use of a local authority accountant to support the headteacher and the school secretary to ensure that the governing body have ready access to up to date information.

85 The governing body are fully involved in all educational developments in school, and monitor the school's planning and classroom practice. The governing body now meets all its statutory requirements and it has appointed a governor responsible for special educational needs. These are all improvements since the last inspection. The school development plan satisfactorily informs the setting of the budget. The governing body

monitors financial spending effectively through its systematic oversight of monthly budget reports. All the recommendations of the 1996 auditor's report have been implemented.

86Local Authority and additional school funding for pupils with special educational needs is well managed to provide classroom support assistants and specialist resources. Funds from a Local Authority initiative have been used very well to replace existing computers in school and create a new computer suite. This has had a positive effect on pupils attainment and progress. The school has also received a grant of £750 from the ‘Sebright Educational Foundation’ to purchase musical instruments; this sum being matched by the active Parent Teacher Association and is well spent.

87Teaching and support staff are mostly well deployed and experienced staff provide a good model of professional practice. Funding for professional development is appropriately linked to school curriculum priorities and staff are using any training they receive well to develop their skills, in line with stated school policies.

88The school has addressed the issue from the last inspection of integrating and co-ordinating the work of support staff well, but there are occasions during the oral part of literacy lessons when support staff could be used more effectively. Effective use is made of visits, loans and school resources to support pupils learning. The school also makes use of extensive resources outside school to enrich the curriculum. These include the herb garden and environmental area along with specialised assistance from the Dudley Environmental team. The computer suite and library are also used very well.

89The previous report found that the school gave sound value for money. In relation to the context in which it operates today, the average attainment on entry, the high standards and quality of education it provides, the good quality of the teaching, the very positive attitudes of the pupils towards their learning, and the average funding, the school provides very good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

Areas of learning for children under five

1At the time of the inspection there were 18 children in reception who had all been admitted three months earlier. The under fives’ classroom is part of the main school building and has no separate secure play area. To compensate for this, twice a week children use the pre-school unit’s play area for outdoor play using a good range of wheeled vehicles. On occasions, items such as slides and climbing frames have been brought into the classroom. By the age of five attainment exceeds nationally agreed targets in all the areas of learning, except in art in the creative area of learning which is what would typically be expected of children of this age. All work is based on the nationally recommended programmes of learning. The progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good, except in art, where it is satisfactory. It is best in the personal and social area of development. The provision for the under fives is good.

2When children start school their personal and social skills are often weaker than those in other areas, they progress very well and are above those expected by the time they are of statutory school age. Children behave very well, and make very good relationships with their adults who work with them. They share resources fairly, such as when playing in the ‘Rhyme House’ where they hold parties for themselves and toys. They are confident about organising their own play, and take on roles of ‘guest’ and ‘server’ of food readily in their home corner play, involving each other in activities. Children show awe at events, for instance, gazing in wonder at Van Gogh’s ‘Starry Night’, and when the teacher introduces the puppet ‘Sammy Snake’. They also show joy when dancing to the music ‘Portsmouth’ in the hall. Before going to the hall for this dance lesson, children change their clothes with very little assistance and fold them neatly in their places. Children are ready to take initiative such as when they thought out a new activity for themselves - of matching party hats to different sized teddy bears in a mathematics lesson.

3The teaching of personal and social education is very good. Staff set very good examples for the children by treating them with respect, valuing their individuality, and expecting them to be responsible and to play together. There is frequent discussion about how to behave, and children’s efforts are praised to develop confidence and self-esteem. Timely but kindly reminders are made when children are inconsiderate to others, and any successes are celebrated with joy. Expectations of children’s behaviour and their ability to undertake responsibility, for example in clearing away, are high, as they are with work, and any initiative is actively encouraged.

4In language and literacy children attain above what is expected for their age. Children enjoy listening to stories, songs and rhymes. Those who have previously enjoyed a story such as ‘Where’s My Teddy?’ or a book of nursery rhymes, join in with enthusiasm, selecting favourite incidents or telling classmates about details in pictures. They also listen attentively to teacher’s expositions and remember new key words – for instance, they talked about Van Gogh’s painting as an illustration (a word learnt in literacy) when first shown his work, and next day had added ‘artist’ to their vocabulary. Children enjoy books on their own, too. One child told the inspector about the moon and his favourite planet, Saturn, which he pointed out while sharing a non-fiction book. All children know how to turn the pages, that reading is from left to right and top to bottom, and many happily relate a story while ‘reading’ the pictures. Higher attaining children read their own sentence in the ‘Twinkle Twinkle Little Star’ class book. Most children write their own names, and many also begin to write other words using the labels around the classroom or from memory. A group of children filled in the day, time and guest on a party invitation unaided while working in the writing corner, and the same children spontaneously recite the alphabet to each other in response to a rhyme on the wall there. Progress is good, with children taking naturally to the need to read and write, and acquiring and practising skills quickly.

5The quality of teaching is good for this area of learning. The teacher presents learning in a very lively and motivating way to capture children’s attention and imagination. The sock puppet is used very effectively to help children learn what words begin with the letter ‘s’. Questions are directed to individual children to assess their understanding and to help them learn new words when reading from large texts. The teacher makes very effective use of children’s own writing of a class book in a reading lesson. The staff take every opportunity to promote learning in reading and writing in the oral parts of lessons. Writing and reading areas in the classroom are often used for children to read and write independently.

6In mathematics children also attain standards above those expected for five year olds, and make good progress in early understanding of number and pattern. They confidently order three and sometimes more objects and use terms such as ‘big,’ ‘smaller than’, ‘bigger than’ and ‘small’ successfully when ordering the three bears and selecting correct beds, chairs, bowls and spoons for them. They also order teddy bears, hats, dishes, rods and many other items, and make animals and other objects in ordered sizes. They can find repeat patterns around the classroom and make simple ones themselves. Children count and match numbers to 10, and talk about larger numbers in rhymes such as ‘The Grand Old Duke of York’. Higher attaining children apply what they have learnt in one activity to other situations.

7The teacher is good at providing a range of varied activities appealing to children for practising ordering, and also at giving many opportunities to rehearse relevant vocabulary. Questioning is pertinent so that the teacher is able to assess children’s understanding and to set further challenges or repeat work where appropriate. A range of relevant resources is available for children to use and choose from, for example, a set of Russian dolls helps children compare sizes. The quality of teaching is good.

8Children’s knowledge and understanding of the world is above what would be expected for children of this age. Children are acquiring knowledge of stars and planets as part of their current topic. In information technology they are acquiring good skills in using the mouse and icon bars to create ‘starry night’ pictures on the computer screen. Many are confident to experiment in changing the background colour, for example. There is regular discussion of plants, animals the weather and seasons, including Christmas, as part of daily routines and within stories and rhymes that are shared. Through talking about their own experiences, and examining Victorian and new household objects, the children gain a sense of the passing of time. Children talk about where they live confidently.

9The quality of teaching knowledge and understanding of the world is good. Good, clear introductions on how to use the computer are followed by timely interventions to enable children to succeed in creating pleasing pictures. Chances are provided for children to make choices about colours and designs and children can practise their skills on the classroom computer as well as when using the computer suite. Opportunities are always grasped to discuss the natural world, and if a child makes a comment both adults are quick to provide information or explanation to stimulate further interest.

10Children’s physical development is above what would be expected. They know how to use space, control their bodies well when stopping after jumping, leaping and running, and many are agile and can balance well. They

make good progress in lessons in increasing the variety of ways of moving and in linking two or three movements together. Children confidently use outdoor play equipment, and they remember the order of movements in their extended star dances. They have daily opportunities to use simple tools, mould plasticene and use a range of construction kits to make simple models. They are competent at using these.

- 11The quality of teaching is good. While the teacher provides good opportunities to sustain energetic activity and assesses children's work to identify effectively children to use as exemplars of good movement, the nursery nurse shows by example, and helps children with special educational needs to participate fully. Instructions are clear, and children are taught to follow these carefully and to concentrate even though there are distractions when others walk across the hall. Activities for improving fine control are regularly provided, although less imaginatively than other planned work.
- 12Children's creative development is typical for children of this age. They make satisfactory progress. They explore colour and form in their finger paintings in the style of Van Gogh's 'Starry Night', and experience a different technique and medium with wax resist pictures on the same theme. They use their imagination in their star dances, and respond well to the music provided, enjoying the sudden crescendos with jumps and thrusts. Children learn to sing in tune and know some songs by heart. The children are involved in role play and they enjoy writing party invitations.
- 13The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Good stimuli are provided for children to respond imaginatively in art and both adults give useful demonstrations of how to use media and techniques. The adults are also immediately available to give practical assistance to ensure children achieve success. Children's work is appreciated and shared by all. However, opportunities for children to freely explore their own ideas are less frequent or less prolonged, although suggestions are encouraged and valued when offered by children. The opportunities to use powder paint to encourage children to mix colours and experiment with consistency are infrequent.
- 14The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are presented in a lively manner and the teacher is skilful in her questioning. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and staff work well together. The staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and their attitudes to learning. Staff provide a caring environment in which to learn.
- 15The classroom provides a secure and stimulating learning environment, and the adults work effectively together to provide consistent, caring guidance. Planning of activities is well balanced between formal learning and play, and children have plenty of chances to choose what they do. Regular records are kept of their work, and this in addition to information from assessments undertaken when children first start school is used to track progress, taking account of higher attainers and those with special educational needs. Very good liaison with the pre-school unit ensures children settle quickly into school routines and that progress is maintained on transfer.

English

16 Standards of attainment are above average by the end of both key stages, and are well above average in writing and listening. The above average results accords with the latest National Curriculum 1999 test results. The number of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5 was above average, both in relation to national statistics and schools with similar intakes. They were not quite as good as last year where more pupils attained the higher Level 5. Similarly in Key Stage 1, standards are higher in writing than in reading. Standards are good when compared to schools with a similar intake. Standards in reading are not as high as they were last year when a slightly higher proportion of pupils attained the national average. Standards have risen over the past few years and since the last inspection. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be in line with national expectations with underachievement in a quarter of Key Stage 2 lessons. While boys and girls do equally well at Key Stage 1, boys do less well than girls at Key Stage 2. The school is aware of this anomaly in attainment, particularly in writing, and is taking active steps to redress this by selecting resources and subject matter for study that is appealing to boys. The school has introduced a new reading scheme recently for the younger pupils but this is new and has not yet had time to impact on reading standards. Standards of literacy at the end of both key stages is above average.

17 By the end of both key stages pupils' attainment in speaking is above average and well above in listening. Key Stage 1 pupils are questioned carefully to enable them to express their ideas and thoughts fully. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to speak to the whole class during the reviewing of a lesson's work as when Year 2 shared their own lines of poetry to fit the pattern of 'Hard to Please'. All adults use and repeat relevant vocabulary, which is readily adopted by most pupils and then used, often with relish, in responses. For example, Year 6 pupils describe the character of Lady Macbeth with words such as 'aggressive', 'despicable', 'cunning' and 'persuasive'. A group of higher attaining pupils also enjoyed speaking aloud one of the witches' speeches from 'Macbeth' and read with great expression. Pupils are well aware of how to speak to different audiences and vary their delivery to suit the occasion as when two Year 6 pupils gave a football team report and others led the prayers. Pupils listen carefully to the contributions of others and to their teachers, and pupils ask pertinent and sometimes penetrating questions to enable them to understand their work more fully.

18 In reading, pupils' attainment is above average. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are confident readers. Many read fluently and with expression, and all are able to apply a range of strategies to work out unknown words. They are beginning to discuss incidents and characters in group reading sessions. In Year 1 pupils are already aware of the contents page, for example, this was used in the lesson on making a milkshake, and some pupils know what an index is, and that it is organised alphabetically. Key Stage 2 pupils have a good understanding of what they read. One Year 6 reader, for instance, referred to the text to give ways in which the author built a climax, while another illustrates why a character is mean and explains the use of the description 'stingy Scrooge' by referring to the story containing the original Dickens character. Most Year 6 pupils, often because of attendance at the excellent lunchtime library club, are already confident about locating books using the Dewey system, and subsequently finding facts by referring to the index and scanning or skimming pages for particular information. They enjoy all sections of the library while doing 'Find a Fact' activities in these busy lunch time sessions.

19 Pupils' attainment in writing is well above average by the end of both key stages. By the age of seven pupils write at length for a variety of purposes such as Year 2's descriptions of Victorian artefacts, job applications and poems currently on display or in progress. This writing is usually punctuated by full stops and capital letters, and even Year 1 often correct their punctuation as they work because of a desire for accuracy. Spelling is also frequently correct, not only everyday words, but also the more interesting vocabulary which many pupils use. By the age of eleven, pupils' work is often exciting, original and written in a suitable style, such as the Year 5 stories where pupils wrote as if they were a ship's boy in Tudor times. They relate typical incidents such as floggings with clarity and empathy, often using devices such as simile for effect. Pupils are also confident writers in a range of other contexts. Those applying for the job of librarian, for instance, give clear and concise outlines of their skills and experience, and their geography field notes give accurate summaries of their findings. Pupils use dictionaries and thesauruses readily to support their work, with the result that work is frequently accurately written with a range of punctuation marks and correct spelling. All pupils' handwriting is well formed, and by Year 3 many pupils are joining their letters, so that it becomes fluent and neatly presented in ink.

well before pupils move on to secondary school.

20Progress is good throughout the school for all pupils over time, and in lessons. It is also good and sometimes very good for pupils with special educational needs in relation to their capabilities, especially for those pupils who are withdrawn individually for extra support. This good progress is the result of teachers' high expectations, a well-planned curriculum and pupils' very positive attitudes. In lessons pupils work hard to complete much work, fulfilling the demanding expectations of the objectives set. Pupils are eager to accept advice and rise to a challenge. Year 6 pupils, for instance struggle to understand the story of Macbeth when introduced to it but listen carefully and use written information to build their comprehension, so that two lessons later they can talk confidently about incidents. The amount of time given to practise new concepts and ideas is well-matched to pupils needs. For example, while lower attainers and those with special educational needs in Year 2 are still getting to grips with rhyming words, higher attainers are applying knowledge of rhyme and rhythm to write their own lines of poetry. Reading books are well matched to pupils' prior learning, and pupils are encouraged to sensibly select texts to match their own preferences as soon as they have the skills to do so. Pupils are expected to become independent as soon as possible and are helped by a range of support devices such as word lists, dictionaries and information sheets, and by learning strategies for tackling work and essential skills for learning from the written word. However, a small number of pupils do occasionally make less than optimum progress either because they cannot read the work set unaided, or are uncertain about using the supports provided, as for instance in Year 5 where some lower attaining pupils received insufficient guidance on using a dictionary efficiently. Writing is used across the curriculum and work is always relevant and purposeful. Pupils are successful in their redrafting of work, particularly when they use the computer. English makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, especially when pupils study literature from the 'Classics' and collaborate in groups.

21Pupils have very good attitudes to English. Most are regular readers who enjoy books for pleasure, and are developing clear preferences for authors or genres. Year 4 pupils, for instance, had good reasons for selecting one of the two winter poems to present to the class. They accepted all the ideas and preferences before choosing how to perform, as pupils frequently do when co-operating on tasks, negotiating with peers and sharing work fairly. They all support each other with spellings or the reading of unknown words. These Year 4 pupils also showed originality when they performed their chosen poem, particularly the group which presented it as a round. When work is demanding they persevere willingly, as in Year 3 when report writing. Pupils are well motivated and written work is of a high standard and pupils take pride in it – only the best will do for many pupils. Pupils are well behaved and attentive.

22Teaching is good at both key stages. The National Literacy Strategy has been adopted well so that lessons are well planned and usually proceed at a brisk pace. Organisation is efficient, including careful attention to the use of interesting and appealing resources such as diary extracts from 'The Jenius' in Year 5, and part of a video in Year 6. Tasks set are well matched to pupils' differing needs. Marking is conscientious - and at best identifies not only the good features of pupils' work, but also those aspects which could be further improved. Teachers are often good at less formal assessment, effectively selecting pupils' work as exemplars at the ends of lessons to show what can be achieved. Attentive listening by teachers enables them to assess misconceptions, and the best teaching also encourages pupils to ask their own questions. Although classroom assistants frequently provide very valuable support to pupils during independent work, during oral sessions there are too many occasions where they are inactive.

23The co-ordinators have ensured that the National Literacy Strategy has been smoothly introduced, and are alert to the need for refinement by monitoring provision. Many high quality resources have been provided, although rising standards in reading are beginning to reveal a need for more high quality, challenging volumes of children's fiction. The library is effectively used, especially at lunchtimes, to develop pupils' reading and research skills across the curriculum. All statutory requirements are met.

Mathematics

24Results of the 1999 national tests show that attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is well above average compared to all schools, and when compared to similar schools. This represents a significant improvement over the 1998 results when compared both to all schools and to similar schools, and from the last inspection where there was underachievement in a quarter of lessons. There was no significant difference between the performance of boys

and girls.

25At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is well above average compared to all schools and to those with a similar intake. These results are better than in 1998 where the proportion of pupils gaining the expected Level 2 was above average. The well above average results at the higher Level 3 have been maintained. This represents a good improvement both from the previous year and since the last inspection. Boys outperform girls but not by a significant margin. Teacher assessments are similar to the test results.

26Inspectors' confirm the results of the 1999 test results of well above average attainment at the end of both key stages. Recent improvements result from the school's early involvement in the pilot scheme for the National Numeracy Strategy, the subsequent familiarity and knowledge gained from its implementation, and the commitment and confidence of the teachers. The good standards at both key stages also result from very good teaching, the setting by pupils' ability, and the integration of mathematics into other subjects. For example, pupil adopt taught methods of counting on, to find the hours of daylight in a science lesson, and pupils practise recalling what they know, for instance, about Roman numerals and 'dodecagons' during a lunch-time 'Browsing' club. Standards at the end of both key stages are very good in numeracy.

27At the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is well above average in all aspects of mathematics. Pupils in Key Stage 1, get off to a good start in their understanding of numbers through lively teaching that sets high expectations and challenges them to explain their thinking. For example, in Year 1, pupils make a chart of the number of cubes picked up correctly, count on and back to 20 and are able to self-correct any mistakes. In Year 1, pupils make simple calculations, using addition and subtraction with numbers up to 19. They know that five and four are the same as four and five. Non-standard measures are used confidently and most Year 1 pupils estimate the size of their spelling books using pencils and rods accurately. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have a very good understanding of place value, ordering and rounding numbers. They can count on and back in 1's, 5's and 10's successfully, and many recognise odd and even numbers, especially the higher attainers. Pupils use their knowledge of their tables well and understand that some numbers end in 0 and 5 and that the adding of the same number a certain number of times is the same as multiplying. They know this is called repeated addition. They understand double numbers and recognise and work out near doubles. They use a range of strategies to work out simple problems. Pupils' ability to apply their mathematical knowledge to everyday real life problems is very good. For example, Year 2 pupils decorate Sally's birthday cake with the appropriate number of coloured candles. They recognise and name correctly two and three-dimensional shapes, such as squares, rectangles, triangles and can describe their properties such as the number of sides and corners. Most pupils gather information systematically and record their findings in simple block graphs and tables, such as bar graphs of favourite foods.

28By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is well above average. All pupils, where appropriate, organise their own work and apply their skills well in problem solving. For example, older pupils recall quickly and calculate accurately mental arithmetic and problems in the school's weekly 'Premier league' mental tests. They recognise the underlying number operations involved, such as the square root of 225 and 20 per cent of 150 and calculate rapidly. By the time pupils are eleven pupils recognise and extend number sequences. For instance, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils examine the patterns formed by the last digits when repeatedly adding 6 and 7, then progressed to looking for patterns using numbers of their own choice. Pupils add, subtract confidently fractions and decimals to four decimal places and checking the results by reversing the operation. They use standard measures well and convert centimetres and millimetres to metres, progressing to converting grammes to kilogrammes and vice versa. In Year 5, pupils compare imperial and metric measurement successfully. Lower attainers in Year 5 successfully measure and calculate the perimeters of polygons and rectangles correctly. Most pupils measure and calculate the perimeter of a rectangle, draw it and explain the formula to their peers. Lower attainers understand that by adding the opposite corners of a 3 by 3 square they always got the answer 32 and soon spotted the pattern. Pupils have a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary and use such terms as 'scalene,' 'axis', 'numerator' and 'denominator' with ease. Pupils use a variety of statistical measures, including the measures of averages. Higher attaining pupils understand and use mode and median, and calculate the mean. Pupils describe quantities using percentages and higher attainers estimate quantities and measures using fractions, decimals and percentages. Pupils produce highly complex drawings of rotational symmetry on the computer. They have a very clear understanding of place value and of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

29 All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in both key stages in lessons and over time. Pupils in all classes are given daily opportunities to practise mental arithmetic which aids their speed of recall and rate of progress made. Pupils are encouraged to find different ways of working out problems and to explain their thinking. This practice greatly benefits pupils' learning. The setting of pupils in Years 5 and 6 allows work to be specifically geared to pupils' ability and allows the pace of lessons to be modified for the lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs and to be speeded up for the higher attaining pupils. During Key Stage 1, pupils of all attainment levels get off to a very good start in their understanding of numbers through lively teaching that sets high expectations and challenges them to explain their thinking. All pupils in most classes are set interesting demanding tasks and challenged by the questions asked which allows them to make optimum progress. For example, a Year 5 class had to find a formula for calculating the perimeter of polygons and apply it; early finishers applied their new knowledge to drawing perimeters of 24 centimetres to other shapes. Occasionally, pupils of average attainment in lower Key Stage 2 make less progress when the text is too difficult. Lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs are well supported by classroom assistants and helped to think through their work to understand. Questions are targeted at individual pupils to ensure their understanding and to make greater demands of them. Homework makes a good contribution to pupils' progress.

30 Most pupils throughout the school have very good attitudes to work. They enjoy the oral and mental parts of the lesson and the other activities planned for them. Most pupils work with enthusiasm and are able to sustain their concentration for long periods when working independently. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils worked collaboratively together and remained focused on the task of finding patterns in number the entire lesson. In this, and other similar lessons where pupils are investigating outcomes, pupils show initiative in deciding how to tackle a problem and respond positively when working unaided. Behaviour is very good, although in two lessons pupils became a little restless. A feature of the majority of lessons observed throughout the school is the high level of interest shown by pupils and their positive attitude to learning. Pupils take a pride in the setting down of their written work. They recall tables and tackle mathematical problems with confidence, competence and enthusiasm.

31 The quality of teaching is very good. It is at least good in nearly nine out of ten lessons and is very good in nearly half of lessons. Occasionally it is outstanding. Teachers' planning in mathematics and their subject knowledge are strengths of the school. What is to be learnt in lessons is meticulously and clearly identified and the well-planned activities enable aims to be realised. In most lessons the teaching is based upon a very good knowledge of the subject and teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve. Lessons are well structured and achieve a good balance between direct teaching and pupils being actively engaged, in purposeful and meaningful tasks that are well matched to pupils' capabilities. The pace of lessons is usually brisk. In the excellent lesson the teacher made good use of pupils to demonstrate particular points; the strength of the lesson was in the degree of discussion generated in explaining methods of identifying patterns of numbers and in the recapping of what had been learnt. In the two lessons observed where the teaching was satisfactory, the introduction of the lesson was slightly long and the teacher's instructions were not entirely clear, which resulted in minor restlessness of the pupils but did not significantly detract from what was being learnt.

32 The subject is effectively monitored by the two enthusiastic co-ordinators who look at lessons plans, observe teachers teach and work alongside teachers. There are clear plans for the future. The lack of opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills, and the amount of time spent on practising skills already acquired, which were criticised at the last inspection have been addressed successfully. Problem solving has now a secure place in the curriculum and teachers now have clear ideas of what they want pupils to learn. As a consequence standards have considerably improved. The National Numeracy Strategy is having a very positive impact on standards.

33 Marking in mathematics shows consistency in most classes in the comments, acknowledgements and rewards used, but there is less information in some as to how pupils can overcome their difficulties and pupils are not encouraged to do their corrections. The Fifty-Five club, which promotes the learning of multiplication tables and the 'Browsing' Club both make very good contributions to pupils' mathematical learning. All statutory requirements are met.

Science

- 34The results of the 1999 national tests and teacher assessments for eleven year olds were well above average compared to all schools nationally and well above the results attained by pupils in similar schools. When considering test results since 1996, they show a steady trend of improvement until this year, which improved by twenty seven per cent on the previous year. Many more pupils in 1999 gained the higher Level 5. This represents a big improvement since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory in a third of lessons. There was little difference in the performance of girls and boys from 1996 to 1999, which is against the national trend.
- 35In the 1999 teacher assessments for seven year olds pupils attained above average results. This result is two per cent lower than the 1998 figures, which were well above at 98 per cent. There are no available comparators this year for similar schools. However, attainment has improved significantly since the last inspection where it was judged to be in line with standards expected nationally.
- 36Inspectors' confirm above average standards by the end of Key Stage 1. When investigating why bulbs will not light, most Year 2 pupils use their knowledge of electrical circuits to identify, for example, batteries placed wrongly or wires not connected. They make good predictions about how chocolate and water might change when heated or cooled and describe these changes using terms such as 'melting' and 'runny'. Higher attaining pupils know that water is a liquid and ice a solid and that water has to be frozen to change to ice. Year 1 pupils know and explore how we use our five senses in making sense of the world, and that, for example our bodies are covered with skin to help us 'feel'. They observe and describe well what they hear, see and feel. Lower attaining pupils quickly recognise everyday sounds on a tape but are less able to put into words the types of sounds they hear. Higher attaining pupils use a good level of vocabulary to describe the tactile qualities of objects in a 'feely' bag, for example, a sponge.
- 37Inspectors' confirm the well above average standards at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils build on their skills of observation, prediction and hypothesising from Key Stage 1. Year 6 pupils understand the effect of exercise and rest on pulse rate and higher attaining pupils give good reasons for the location of pulses, for example, being closer to the skin surface. They are aware of the unreliability of checking a pulse after five minutes knowing that the heart may have recovered by this time. Most pupils in Year 6 apply previous scientific knowledge and understanding of fair tests to new work. For example, they recognise the need for repeat pulse rate measurements, that only one variable at a time must be changed and that the rate of exercise is difficult to measure. All pupils in Year 5, including those with special educational needs, learn about the planets and know that day and night are caused by the rotation of the earth. Year 4 pupils describe the function of molars using words like 'crushing', grinding' and 'squashing' when eating different types of food such as an apple. They know the technical names of teeth, for instance, 'canine' and learn that teeth are shaped in different ways according to their purpose. Pupils in Year 3 set up circuits and insert foil switches. They investigate different materials and identify which are conductors of electricity and which are insulators. Higher attaining pupils know that plastic coating on wire is an insulator and learn that two bulbs in a series circuit are not as bright as one. In a lesson on forces, pupils make reasonable predictions about the effects of adding weights to elastic bands, use equipment effectively in their investigations and record their measurements accurately and independently. Most pupils, including the lower attainers, recognise the opposite direction of the force when an elastic band is stretched. The higher attaining pupils identify a pattern in their results, predict what the next measurement will be and calculate the total stretch.
- 38Pupils make good and often very good progress in lessons, and over time, particularly in the last year. Good progress is achieved because teaching is usually very good and makes a direct impact on the standards pupils achieve. The curriculum is well balanced and allows for the systematic building up of scientific knowledge and skills. For example, pupils in Year 1 make good progress in understanding the conditions necessary for eggs to hatch through their daily observations of eggs incubating. They make predictions, record the temperature, write their observations and explain that the eggs have to be kept under the lamp to keep warm. These skills of prediction, observation and keeping records are built on through the school and by Year 6 pupils have developed these skills very well, for instance, they predict accurately the conditions necessary for the growth of mould in their investigations of food decay, reach reliable conclusions and record their daily observations systematically and often graphically. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their capabilities

in lessons but this is reduced if they are withdrawn for extra literacy work and miss the practical part of the lesson each week.

39 Good links are made with mathematics when pupils use data about times of sunrise and sunset to calculate daylight time and when they record their results in tables and bar charts. Good links with literacy are also made through developing a scientific vocabulary, recording observations by writing and in the use of reference books for independent research. Occasionally some of the texts used for the lower attaining pupils are too challenging. The computer is also used to find information using CD-ROM. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.

40 Pupils' attitudes to their work in science are very good. In Key Stage 1, younger pupils show great enthusiasm investigating the senses and older pupils are very keen to solve the problems posed by their teacher on circuits. In Key Stage 2, Year 3 pupils work with confidence and are absorbed in testing elastic bands. Year 4 pupils handle resources and equipment carefully and carry out their investigation of teeth very sensibly. Year 6 pupils work independently in groups to reach agreement on designing investigations for measuring pulse rates. In all lessons behaviour is very good. Pupils act responsibly, listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. They work sensibly independently as a response to the high expectations teachers have of them.

41 The quality of teaching is very good overall. It is at least good and is very good in three quarters of lessons, and occasionally outstanding in Key Stage 1. This represents a big improvement since the last inspection, where teaching was unsatisfactory in one third of lessons. Strength of the science teaching is its consistency, for example, in teaching methods, planning and preparation. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Lessons have a definite structure, an appropriate emphasis on practical investigations and high expectations of what pupils are to learn. They are briskly paced and teachers build very effectively on what pupils already know. In the outstanding lesson in Key Stage 1, the teacher very carefully matched recording methods and resources to pupils' abilities and asked searching questions to make pupils think like young scientists. In another very good lesson in Key Stage 2, the teacher generated much discussion when challenging pupils' understanding of fair tests by bringing in the element of personal fitness. Teachers give good opportunities in Key Stage 2 particularly, for pupils to plan independent investigations and for pupils to record their work in different ways. Marking is good; teachers indicate where pupils understand new concepts and where they need more support. The use of interactive displays in classrooms, to support and stimulate learning in science, is good.

42 The significant improvement in standards, rate of progress and in teaching is due to the implementation of a new scheme of work, a focus on practical investigation and the school's emphasis on improving teaching and learning. These initiatives have had a very positive impact on the subject since the last inspection. All statutory requirements are met. A lunchtime science club has proved so successful that different year groups have to alternate. The club provides enjoyable, practical activities that encourage pupils' interest in the subject and the standards they achieve.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Information and Communication Technology

43Pupils' attainment is above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2, and in line at Key Stage 1. Only one lesson was observed in Key Stage 1 and evidence was gained from a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' planning and talking to pupils and staff. Not enough evidence was found to confirm above average standards in Key Stage 1. Standards have risen in Key Stage 2 since the last inspection and have been maintained in Key Stage 1. Since the delivery in September of a suite of computers and a variety of other equipment including digital cameras, a scanner and a suitable range of software, the rate of progress has been rapid in Key Stage 2, particularly in Years 3 and 6. It has been satisfactory in Key Stage 1. A lack of equipment was identified previously as a weakness. All statutory requirements are met.

44By Year 6 pupils confidently send e-mails to their friends and surf the Internet with panache. They use the Internet to research for information about their history topic, for example, looking for clothes worn in Britain in the 'Thirties' and browse through information till they find exactly what they are looking for. All pupils in Year 6, including those with special educational needs, have produced excellent presentations using a powerful and sophisticated multi-media software package. Their 'slides' illustrating text and pictures of the Second World War are visually exciting, with 'waves' of text appearing from all sides, accompanied by pictures and 'sounds' associated with wartime. Pupils are adept at incorporating pictures into their work by scanning; downloading them from the Internet or using photographs they have taken using the digital cameras. Older pupils are competent at word processing and use a publishing program to produce well illustrated and written text for newspaper reports. This makes a good link with literacy. Year 4 talk about 'documents' confidently and successfully 'cut', 'copy' and 'paste' text from one place to another when editing a newspaper report of a 'Disaster'. Pupils in Year 3 have a good understanding of how to change the font, size of writing and colour when designing a carton. They are very familiar with bringing up a menu, selecting the correct program and understand technical terms such as 'font', 'file' and 'directory' and remember how to save their work. Higher attaining pupils rapidly learn how to mix text and graphics and transfer work from one program to another. Lower attaining pupils are less secure in their knowledge of how to make changes to their work but persevere till they succeed. Year 5 using an encyclopaedia program effectively search for information on 'space' and 'mountains' for their topic. They skim and scan the texts for relevant information to answer set questions successfully, although lower attaining pupils sometimes have problems in reading what is on the screen. Higher attaining pupils are very adept at locating information. All pupils in Key Stage 2 are good at the basic skills of opening and closing files, finding programs, saving and printing their work. Pupils have mostly satisfactory keyboard skills and use the mouse effectively. Lower attaining pupils are sometimes slow and hesitant in their typing.

45By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know how to write their surname, password and log-on and off the network. They know they need to click on the 'Applications' file to find the correct program and understand how to scroll each page. Pupils control an 'object' on the screen. Higher attaining pupils quickly learn to program the 'object' to move along different pathways, for example, from house to house by making ninety degree turns and moving forward a set number of steps. Younger pupils in Year 1 produce simple graphs and writing on the computer. They learn about the power of the computer and appreciate how photographs taken by using the digital camera can be used to allow them to see their faces on the monitor.

46Pupils in Key Stage 2 have made very good progress overall since September. Their enthusiasm for the subject in Year 6 is boundless and their very positive attitudes and willingness to experiment greatly aids their progress. Many pupils are keen to attend the several lunchtime and after school clubs and these clearly greatly benefit pupils. They often talk about what they have learnt in these sessions. The club where children and parents learn together is much appreciated by both parties. Pupils' progress is greatly enhanced when the teaching is very good and pupils are given plenty of opportunities to learn from their mistakes and make choices about their work such as in choosing the colour, the font or size of writing. Lower attaining pupils occasionally make satisfactory but not as quick progress when the text of the program is too hard for them. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in relation to their capabilities in Key Stage 2 and good progress in Key Stage 1. Sometimes these pupils work as pairs so they can be helped by their peers and at other times they work on their own to ensure that they do not let a partner do all the work. Pupils with visual impairments are helped by the

provision of a large screen. These practices enable these pupils to make maximum progress. Occasionally a pupil is withdrawn for a specialist music lesson and on these occasions pupils have opportunities to make up lost time within the lesson. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress over time and good progress in the one lesson seen. Pupils make good gains in understanding of files and how to log-on and off and how to investigate and explore routes for the programmable toy. They make satisfactory progress in using the mouse, keyboard, and saving and printing their work. Pupils often do work at home if they have access to a computer and this greatly aids their progress.

47All pupils sustain interest and persevere even when faced with difficulties. In some lessons pupils make audible gasps of awe as they stare at the screen and are impressed with the power of the computer. They are very co-operative with each other and are keen to share what they know. They are often very pleased and proud of their work, particularly their presentations and how easily they can find information on the Internet. They are very friendly to visitors, demonstrating their skills enthusiastically and talk entertainingly about what they want to learn next. They ask pertinent and relevant questions about the teachers' demonstrations and carry out instructions well. All pupils are often very engrossed in their tasks and are always well behaved. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development when pupils work together in pairs and to their cultural development when using the Internet to search for historical information.

48The teaching is very good overall. It is very good in seven out of ten lessons, including the one Key Stage 1 lesson. Teachers plan their work very carefully ensuring they know exactly what they want pupils to learn. They are confident in their demonstrations, aided very effectively by the classroom assistant, and are well prepared. They are knowledgeable about the program being used and familiar with any pitfalls. Teachers use the large whiteboard to make clear teaching points and are skilful in their questioning to ensure that all pupils understand what they have to do. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and level of work. Often the work is very challenging and involves, towards the upper end of the school, the use of adult programs. Occasionally the reading material is too difficult for the lower attainers. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and teachers recap on previous work and build on this successfully. Teachers maintain very good discipline and have very good relationships with pupils. There has been a significant improvement in teaching since the last inspection where it was judged to be mainly unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1 and sound or better in Key Stage 2.

49The co-ordination of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has supported colleagues successfully and ensured that the new equipment is being used effectively. It is evident that teachers have worked very hard to learn how to use the new equipment and programs. The school is very well placed to carry out its action plan to make further improvements. The computers in classrooms are not as effectively used, especially in literacy and numeracy lessons.

Art

50Few lessons in art were observed. The scrutiny of work on display and talks with pupils indicates that most pupils make satisfactory progress in each key stage and reach standards that are broadly in line with expectations for their age. Pupils with special educational needs often make good progress in relation to their abilities because they are helped individually by staff who are sensitive to their needs.

51Pupils in Key Stage 1 produce high quality drawings of fruit and Victorian artefacts and lively and colourful paintings of themselves. They make satisfactory collages, models, and copy the work of famous artists such as William Morris with confidence and care. They learn about the lives of famous artists and make good links to history. They are sometimes unsure about which colours make green, brown and purple when mixed together. Pupils understand how to make a simple repeated pattern when printing a design based on the work of William Morris. In Key Stage 2 pupils continue to study the work of famous artists and by the end of the key stage have a good knowledge of several famous artists work such as Henri Matisse, Kandinsky, Quentin Blake and Hans Holbein. Year 6 pupils understand the style of the 'art deco' period and make good progress in painting vivid bold designs in the style of Clarice Cliff using their observational drawings of flowers, as a focus. They are well aware of the differences between the styles of different artists and confidently compare the works of Clarice Cliffe with L.S. Lowry. Pupils in Year 5 use a variety of media to produce a satisfactory range of landscapes in the style of Seurat using the technique of pointillism. Pupils encounter an increasing variety of media, both two-

dimensional and three-dimensional as they progress through the school. They make exciting and colourful African masks with well-proportioned features and many pupils produce detailed and careful drawings and sketches of a Tudor house they visited. Some older pupils are still unsure how to mix colours, for example, to make brown. The work in sketchbooks provides a satisfactory assessment of pupils' progress in drawing.

52The subject often makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual development by inspiring pupils to contemplate the wonders of nature, and to their cultural development by exposing them to a variety of work of famous artists. Throughout the school, pupils look critically at the work of different artists and attempt to produce work in the same style themselves.

53Teachers link their art teaching to other subjects whenever possible. The making of clay divas and the drawing of 'Mendhi' and 'Rangoli' patterns, go alongside the work pupils do in religious education. The work pupils undertake on the art deco period links well with the history topic of 'Britain since the thirties'. The youngest children in Reception make colourful pictures on the computer screen and computers are well used to generate symmetrical designs in mathematics. Effective links with literacy are made when pupils write about the lives of famous artists.

54The pupils respond positively to the often rich visual environment that the teachers provide, showing a lively interest in the subject. They concentrate on their individual work and help and encourage each other. Boys and girls work well together and stop immediately on the teachers' signal. Pupils work quietly and are always well behaved. They are careful with the equipment and try hard to produce their best work. Pupils act as monitors to get out resources sensibly and are very willing to tidy equipment away.

55In the few lessons seen the quality of teaching varies from very good to unsatisfactory. It is better in Key Stage 2 where it is occasionally very good. The teaching in two out of three lessons in Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory. Teachers plan their work carefully. Teachers are well prepared and use a variety of artefacts and resources to stimulate pupils' imagination and understanding. They give clear instructions and explanations and encourage pupils to improve their work. They support lower attaining pupils well. When on the rare occasions when pupils with special needs are withdrawn from lessons they ensure pupils are well briefed about the work and they are given sufficient time and help to complete the work set. Where the teaching is very good the teacher presents the work in a lively way using lots of pictures, photographs and plants to stimulate pupils' interest. The teacher makes very effective teaching points and insists pupils think deeply about their work to make improvements. Where the teaching is unsatisfactory the teacher is not clear about what the pupils are to learn from the activities and over directs the work. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use powder paint and to mix their own colours, and this has a negative effect on their work. Occasionally in Key Stage 1, some of the work displayed is too teacher directed and in this work there is little opportunity for pupils to explore and be creative for themselves.

56The school has maintained the satisfactory standards since the last inspection but the teaching in Key Stage 1 is not as good as it was.

Design and Technology

57Little teaching of design and technology was observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on the lesson seen, discussions with pupils and staff, scrutiny of planning and examples of pupils' work. The evidence indicates that progress for all pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs, is satisfactory. Pupils achieve standards typical for their age at seven and eleven. The satisfactory standards have been maintained since the last inspection and there is no evidence now of underachievement. Curriculum planning has improved and pupils now have access to wider range of materials and resources.

58By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils show satisfactory skills in cutting sheet card and materials to a planned shape, and joining them using an appropriate range of techniques, such as glue and cellotape, for instance when making a sun hat. Pupils build up their techniques of joining materials, when they make a jointed puppet using split pins and make packages using tabs. Pupils discuss sensibly the properties of different fruits and choose their own to make a fruit cocktail drink. They understand that a cocktail is a mixture and realise what will happen when the fruit is mixed in a blender. They discuss the safe and hygienic use of equipment and the importance of personal hygiene in the preparation of food. Pupils use textiles, card and construction kits. Vehicles on display show a good use of construction kits to make wheeled toys such as the life-size tricycle made by Year 2 pupils and a model using cogs. Pupils use their skills well, for example in designing and making a moving fairground carousel from thin card, attaching the horses by the use of tabs and using a cotton reel and an elastic band to make it move. These models are of high quality.

59At Key Stage 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of the design process. Evidence from photographs and talking to pupils, shows they know how to plan their work, decide what materials they will need and when the task is completed, critically assess how the work could have been undertaken more effectively. For example, in Year 6 pupils designed and made an attractive wall hanging of different fishes using a variety of textiles such as cotton and felt, and decorated them with sequins, braid and threads. The pupils appreciated that changing the colours and making some of the designs bigger would have improved their work. Year 6 pupils produce original and interesting motorised and battery powered vehicles which are designed and presented to a high standard. Pupils in Year 4 design and make their own food carton after carefully designing its shape from either a cube or cuboid net. They construct their package in card and decorate their product using computer-generated designs. Planning shows that Years 5 and 6 use circuit and control mechanisms to make bridges, dams and traffic lights. By the end of the key stage pupils understand that a successful product is based on detailed research, careful design, skilled making and modification after evaluating the finished product, as seen in the older pupils' 'design and make' plans for a 'sea fantasy' wall hanging.

60Pupils' attitudes to design and technology are good. They enjoy their work and are very enthusiastic, especially when using construction kits and constructing food packages. They are attentive when the teacher explains what they have to do and are keen to complete the given task. Pupils handle materials and tools in a responsible manner and use them carefully, with due regard to health and safety.

61Good links are made to work in information and communication technology when pupils design the outside packaging for their cereal boxes and in mathematics when pupils use nets of shapes to use as starting points for their packages. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills when discussing the properties of fruit.

62Teaching was good in the one lesson seen in Key Stage 2. The teacher challenged pupils' thinking and built on their knowledge well. The teacher has a good knowledge of the subject and explained what to do well. The lesson proceeded at a brisk pace. The Local Education Authority's advisory teacher gave an effective model lesson to two Key Stage 1 classes. This sets a good example for the staff and helps to raise their confidence and subject knowledge. Teachers have a more secure knowledge of the subject than was evidenced in the previous inspection (as shown in the planning). Pupils are now given opportunities to experiment with finishing techniques and to refine their design ideas. Teachers prepare thoroughly for lessons, providing more opportunities for pupils to use a range of appropriate tools and materials than was evident during the last inspection, for example, left handed scissors for pupils, large construction sets, hacksaws, soldering irons and a variety of wood. Teachers are well supported by a detailed scheme of work.

Geography

63Only one geography lesson was seen during the week of the inspection. However, examination of pupils' work and teachers' records, together with discussions with pupils and an interview with the co-ordinator, indicate that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress. They attain an appropriate quality of work in relation to their ages at the end of both key stages. Similar standards and progress have been maintained since the last inspection.

64In Key Stage 1, pupils develop an awareness of different types of houses found in the local area. They learn to use tally charts and graphs to record accurately the different types of housing found in Wollaston. Pupils develop basic mapping skills using the local area around the school, and know the countries of the British Isles. Pupils learn what it would be like to live in Chembakolli, a village in India.

65In Key Stage 2, pupils progress to a more advanced study of their local area and hometown. In Year 3 they plot a route on a map of their way to school using a key. Year 4 pupils contrast and compare differences between Wollaston with the village of Arley. They develop their mapping skills and use co-ordinates in pinpointing accurately locations on the map. Pupils in Year 5 study the effects of tourism in mountain regions, and debate the issues of pollution and erosion on mountain landscapes. They develop their awareness of different continents and countries in the world. Year 6 pupils make detailed studies of the impact of rivers on the landscapes in Britain. Pupils visit a river and make a detailed study of Bourn Brook, which has helped develop their understanding of the main parts of a river system and how it erodes the landscape away.

66Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very positive. They enjoy discussing and debating the advantages and disadvantages of tourism and came up with many sensible ideas. They enthusiastically report back to their peers what they have found out from their research using holiday brochures.

67In the one lesson observed in Key Stage 2, the teaching was good. It was well planned, with good pace and imaginative use of holiday brochures to spark pupils' interest in the lesson. The work was well matched to pupils' abilities and a classroom assistant effectively supported lower attaining pupils. This good teaching helped pupils to make good progress in their understanding of the issues involved in promoting tourism to regions of great beauty. The school makes good use of outside speakers to bring geography 'alive' to pupils. For example, members of a local mountaineering club come in the school to share with the pupils their experiences.

68The subject makes significant contribution to the development of literacy and numeracy in school. Pupils develop their speaking and listening skills, along with vocabulary associated with human and physical geography. The use of tally charts and graphs in Year 2 makes a significant contribution to the development of mathematics in the school. This is further developed in Key Stage 2, when pupils use co-ordinates in their map work. Pupils often use information and communication technology to enhance the presentation of their work, for example, in the high quality booklets on particular rivers such as the River Nile.

69Geography makes a positive contribution to the pupils' moral, social and cultural development. For example, Year 5 pupils discuss the issues raised by pollution and erosion by tourists in different mountain regions of the world, against the impact tourism makes on the local economy.

History

70By the end of both key stages pupils achieve standards that are better than those expected nationally, and all pupils, including those with special needs, make consistently good progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Few lessons were observed in Key Stage 1.

71From their entry into school, pupils develop a good understanding of time and chronology. Pupils in Year 1 learn how to put events they celebrate in chronological order and know, for instance, that Jesus was born a long time before the 'Gunpowder Plot' took place. They identify similarities and differences between Victorian times and their own, and recognise various domestic items, toys and games from the Victorian period. They have a good understanding and are knowledgeable about the different lives and work of people from these times.

72At Key Stage 2, pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of periods in the past successfully, through a range of interesting topics. Pupils studying Britain since the 1930's gain insights into what it was like by examining and exploring artefacts such as gas masks, bellows, a mangle, a Bakelite telephone and other items. They are keen to know whether the 'wind up' gramophone still works and to learn about army uniforms. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good factual knowledge of the past and show well developed skills in locating and using historical texts and documents to understand and interpret historical evidence. For example, in the study of St. James church pupils used school records, for instance, the logbook and old photographs of past staff to gain insights into peoples lives. Pupils gain knowledge about past major personalities such as Boadicea and the impact of the Roman Conquest on Great Britain.

73All pupils make good progress over time and often very good progress during lessons. Pupils make excellent progress when they select their own historical artefacts to use in their role-play. For example, pupils in Year 2, use a 'dolly tub', 'posser' and a 'flat' iron in their acting out of the Victorian Monday washday. Using artefacts in this way helps pupils empathise and allows them to reflect on lives in different times. It brings history alive for pupils. Pupils gained real insight into the lives of chimney sweeps, street lamplighters and domestic servants through such role-play. Similarly Year 6 pupils make significant progress through examining and exploring artefacts from the Second World War and later.

74History makes a good contribution to pupils' learning in reading and writing. Pupils write lengthy accounts of the Tudors and Henry VIII. They record their observations of visits to Harvington Hall and make good progress in researching for information from a variety of resources. They surf the Internet to find articles to support their topic work, for instance, looking up the value of antique clothes in a lunchtime club. Homework plays an important part in pupils' learning. Pupils complete booklets to support their topic work to a high standard at home. Good links are made with art and information and communication technology when pupils sketch Tudor houses on their visit and when making 'slide' presentations of the Second World War to show to other classes.

75Pupils in both key stages respond enthusiastically to history. They respond eagerly to teachers' questions, listen and contribute well. They work well together in collaborative investigative activities and behaviour is very good. Year 2 pupils love using the artefacts in role-play situations and older pupils also appreciate being able to handle and examine a range of artefacts. Pupils often ask pertinent questions of their own to enable them to understand better. One pupil who was unable to obtain the resource he needed when researching into the properties of a telephone, pursued his enquiry later and produced a detailed, correctly written account of its composition. Pupils enjoy the field trips to the Tudor Hall and Hartlebury Castle. Year 2 pupils have the opportunity to glimpse life in a Victorian kitchen and visitors from the Toy Museum enhance Year 1 pupils' understanding of how toys and books have changed over the last 50 years. These opportunities for pupils to learn through first hand experience greatly aid pupils understanding of history.

76The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory. It is good in half the lessons in Key Stage 2 and is occasionally outstanding in Key Stage 1. Teachers have a very good understanding of the teaching of history. Their planning is very good and teachers make effective and consistent use of the scheme of work, which ensures that all elements of the curriculum are covered. Teachers prepare their resources thoroughly and make very effective use of first hand experience and historical artefacts and documentary evidence such as photographs, oral accounts by grandparents of their experiences and church archives. In the outstanding lesson, the teacher's subject knowledge was excellent, planning was thorough and of high quality. The teaching was lively and the teacher was particularly skilful in the questioning of pupils to deepen their thinking and understanding. The teacher used the motivating resources in a stimulating and purposeful way and as a result Year 2 pupils were able to communicate successfully, their awareness and understanding of the attitudes, feeling and hardships of Victorian people through their acting. In the satisfactory lessons the teacher did not present the lesson in a sufficiently interesting or stimulating way.

77The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural development.

Music

78Pupils' attainment in music is in line with expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils' of all abilities including those with special educational needs, make sound progress. There is a high quality of singing in lessons and in assemblies where pupils sing with feeling and understanding of the words of hymns. The school maintains similar standards and progress as it did in the previous inspection.

79In Key Stage 1, pupils sing a range of unaccompanied songs tunefully, and pay attention to diction. They clap in time, tap a steady beat and change the tempo using a variety of untuned percussion. They understand the need to rehearse and refine their work when composing their rhythms. They perform with confidence, sustaining rhythm and repeating musical patterns. Pupils record their musical ideas using different instruments and are keen to share their compositions with others. They have an understanding of the high and low sounds instruments produce and apply it well in performance. For example, a Year 1 class recited the 'Bear Hunt' story using voice and instruments to demonstrate which were different characters and parts in the story.

80In Key Stage 2, pupils explore musical arrangements, marking both steady and more complex beats. They enjoy singing and have an interesting repertoire which includes songs from other times and cultures. For example, in Year 4 pupils were using Sousa's 'Washington Post' to help develop the idea of singing to a marching tune. Pupils are developing control of diction and phrasing. They sing tunefully unaccompanied at times, but also to piano or musical keyboard. Their musical vocabulary includes their understanding of how different instruments can be heard in the foreground and background and they know about and perform a story or theme which includes use of pitch, tempo and an understanding of the effect of making sounds louder or softer. For example, in Year 3 pupils told a story using different musical instruments to convey a mood of happiness or sadness. They recognise how composers and songwriters convey their intentions and translate this into performances, through creating mood and atmosphere. For instance Year 5 pupils listen and appraise the music of Gustav Holst and his 'Planet Suite' and learn how the work builds into a crescendo.

81All pupils enjoy their music lessons. They are enthusiastic learners, very well behaved and attentive. They respond very well and have positive attitudes to the subject. They are keen to improve their performances and sustain their concentration well. Pupils show a willingness to persevere and support each other sensitively where appropriate. Relationships are very good. All pupils share resources readily and use them carefully.

82The overall quality of teaching observed in both key stages is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Planning is effective, with careful attention given to extending the range of pupils' musical experiences. Lessons are well structured, show clear progression in learning and include intelligent use of resources and space in classrooms. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace with usually a carefully planned sequence of exposition, practice, review and appraisal. Pupils are asked what mood the music conveyed and meant to them and are helped to appreciate how composers create different effects. Teachers intervene regularly to make effective teaching points to help pupils' understanding. Many pupils benefit from the good specialist music teaching for a range of instruments, including the voice.

83Currently the school has no co-ordinator, and the headteacher is temporally leading the subject. The school's policy and scheme is detailed and structured and provides effective guidance for teachers, particularly the non-specialist. The school has a strong musical tradition, participating in the Dudley Music Festival, the school choir sang with adults at 'Viva Musica' last Christmas and at a flower festival in a local church. The school also has a well-attended music club. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

Physical Education

84By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in games are above those expected of pupils nationally and are typical of what is expected for pupils at eleven in dance and gymnastics. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain above the standards expected nationally in dance and games and attain standards in gymnastics that are typical for pupils of this age. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Most pupils learn to swim twenty-five metres and beyond before they leave the school at eleven.

85By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils create their own dance movements in response to the mechanical rhythm of the music. They accompany and echo the mood of the music by clapping their hands on different parts of their bodies to produce different sounds as they move. They build up simple sequences of linked movements and have good control of their bodies, co-ordination and a sense of rhythm. In a hockey lesson, pupils control the ball well with the stick when passing to a partner and when dribbling the ball round a cone.

86Pupils build on their skills in dance and by the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils make sensitive interpretations of the recorded music 'Cavatina' by John Williams, whilst communicating the contrasting moods and rhythms. They vary their speeds and contrast the lightness of 'moon dust' with strong movements of a storm, they move smoothly from one movement to another. They hold their shapes with 'moments of stillness' to give the movements drama, and show reasonable poise and tension when matching movements to those of their partner. In games, pupils' pass and receive the rugby ball efficiently in small group competitions and have good tactics to avoid being tagged. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 hold a variety of balances for a reasonable time and perform gymnastics movements such as shoulder-stands, bridges and rolls with agility, accuracy and control. They catch

and move with a ball well when dodging and marking in skittle-ball type mini-games. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a good understanding of the effects that short-term exercise has on their bodies.

87Progress for all pupils is good at Key Stage 1 in dance and games and skills are developing progressively as pupils move through the school. In Year 1, pupils extend their repertoire of movements when matching their partner's work. They jump, roll and travel on hands and feet with agility and learn to control their landings carefully from apparatus. Pupils in Year 2 in dance, learn to start with a period of stillness and improve their co-ordination, poise and body control through practising and refining their sequences of movements. Year 2 pupils make good progress in games because the teacher makes relevant teaching points and pupils are given ample opportunities to practise their skills. Support staff are very effective in the way they help pupils with special educational needs by joining in the lesson and demonstrating what they are to do. This aids their progress.

88Progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is at least satisfactory and often good in Key Stage 2, particularly in games. Year 3 make good progress in their gymnastic balances, using pointed toes and well stretched positions, to show clear body shapes and tension, for instance, in their shoulder stands and bridges. Pupils in Year 4 build up more complex sequences of movements but their movements lack the same precision and muscle tension. In games, Year 3 pupils improve their aiming skills when throwing when they realise that their partner needs to stand still. Year 6 pupils improve their defensive and attacking strategies when practising their rugby skills and in small team games.

89Pupils' attitudes to physical education are good overall. They have very good social skills. Younger pupils applaud and show respect for others' performances and older pupils in dance lessons make good, supportive comments on ways of improving others' work. Pupils listen carefully to instructions, concentrate on their work often silently and collect and organise their apparatus sensibly. Most pupils work very well together in pairs, when planning a sequence of movements in gymnastics and dance and when co-operating in small team games. They usually behave exceptionally well but a few pupils in a Key Stage 2 lesson disrupt the working atmosphere by chatting when they should be working. Pupils are well aware of the need for safety and usually get out apparatus swiftly and efficiently.

90The quality of teaching is good overall in both key stages. It is good or better in three quarters of lessons in Key Stage 1 and is occasionally outstanding. In Key Stage 2 it is good in half the lessons and occasionally very good. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, when teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory in most lessons in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Teachers plan their work carefully and give good opportunities for pupils to refine their movements and to practice new skills and techniques. They make good use of pupils' demonstrations to make effective teaching points and encourage constructive criticism of these demonstrations so pupils appreciate what they need to achieve. Lessons are usually well-paced and good warm-up and cool-down activities are set. In an excellent dance lesson in Year 2, the structure of the lesson allowed for the gradual development of movements, the teacher intervened at just the right moments to take learning forward and pupils were given good opportunities to evaluate and interpret their own ideas. In the few satisfactory lessons the teacher did not emphasise sufficiently how pupils were to improve the precision of their movements, for example, by encouraging pupils to stretch their limbs. On another occasion the teacher allowed pupils to chat when they should have been concentrating on their sequence of movements. The practice of withdrawing pupils with special educational needs from physical education lessons at the same time each week means that these pupils do not have opportunities on return for warming-up, and this is not entirely satisfactory.

91Provision for outdoor and adventurous education is made for Year 6 pupils through a yearly residential visit where they undertake such activities as abseiling and archery, and an athletics programme is planned for the summer terms. The school has maintained its very good provision of extra-curricular activities in football, netball, cross country running, athletics and dance and these make a positive contribution to the standards attained.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence

The inspection was carried out by a team of six inspectors over 24 days.

During the period of the inspection, 76 lessons or part lessons were observed.

Inspectors attended school assemblies and registration periods.

Samples of pupils' work were examined for each class for the current and previous academic year.

A comprehensive range of school documentation including the school development plan, teachers' records, all curriculum planning documents, the records kept on pupils, sample reports sent to parents and the school registers were inspected.

In each year group, inspectors listened to a sample of pupils read.

Discussions were held with members of staff, governors, pupils, parents and administrative assistants.

A parents' meeting held prior to the inspection was attended by 34 parents at which they expressed their views about the work of the school.

The responses to the 140 questionnaires (representing 40 per cent of all questionnaires) completed by parents were taken into account during the inspection.

The budget figures and the most recent audit report were examined.

Data and indicators

PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y6	348	2	56	48

TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	15.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.3

Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked each week	250

Average class size:	26.8
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FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	658,584
Total expenditure	635,262
Expenditure per pupils	1,596.14
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,276
Balance carried forward to next year	30,598

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	346
Number of questionnaires returned:	140

Responses (total number of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	59	72	6	3	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with problems or questions to do with my child (ren).	72	54	4	6	4
The school handles complaints from parents well	33	58	27	7	4
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	47	83	5	3	2
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	58	70	5	3	3
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	64	66	5	2	3
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	64	60	9	4	2
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	46	78	6	7	1
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	65	67	7	0	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	67	64	6	1	1
My child(ren) like(s) school	80	47	8	2	3