

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HAMSTEAD JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Great Barr, Birmingham

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103895

Headteacher: Mrs Janet Smith

Reporting inspector: Mr David Carrington  
15414

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> –15<sup>th</sup> March 2001

Inspection number: 197384

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hamstead Road Great Barr Birmingham
Postcode:	B43 5BE
Telephone number:	0121 357 1557
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Ann Lewis
Date of previous inspection:	15 <sup>th</sup> –18 <sup>th</sup> September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15414	Mr David Carrington	Registered inspector	Mathematics	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management
9928	Mr Alan Dobson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
26045	Mrs Carole Bond	Team inspector	Science History English as an additional language Equal opportunities	Quality and range of the curriculum
1189	Mrs Sharon Brown	Team inspector	Art and design Music Physical education Special educational needs	
7593	Mr John Collier	Team inspector	English Religious education	
12013	Mrs Juliet Joy	Team inspector	Geography Design and technology Information and communication technology	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hamstead Junior School is a large primary school situated in the north east corner of Sandwell, not far from the border with Birmingham. There are 169 boys and 155 girls aged seven to eleven in school who live in the area surrounding the school and are mainly from white European families. This is a popular school that is over-subscribed. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs, statements and who speak English as an additional language are all above the level usually found. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is about average and most pupils complete all four junior years in school. Most pupils join the school from the nearby infant school and they have broadly average levels of knowledge, skill and understanding at that time. The aims of the school are to ensure that all pupils achieve their full potential by providing the best teaching and learning possible.

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

Hamstead Junior School is an effective school. Because there is shared commitment to improving standards, and a productive working atmosphere in lessons, pupils make good progress. They build knowledge, skills and understanding at a good rate because teaching quality is good. Standards in all subjects are satisfactory at least, with good standards in English, history, music, and religious education. The pupils are developing into pleasant, well-behaved children who get on well with each other and the adults in school. There are still a number of things that managers know they have to improve, but the will and determination to succeed in these things is shown clearly by all staff. The school gives good value for money.

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

- The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher, and the deputy headteacher, senior and subject managers support her very well. All work hard in the interests of the pupils.
- The quality of teaching and learning are both good and this means that all pupils make good progress.
- All pupils, regardless of background, are valued and expected to do well.
- Standards in English, history, music and religious education are good and there are strengths in several other subjects.
- There is a good curriculum and this provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop into very pleasant individuals who behave well and enjoy their learning.

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

- More work is needed to make geography as well promoted as other subjects.
- Assessment has improved in English and mathematics, but is not yet as strong in other subjects.
- Not all subject managers have opportunities to check standards, teaching and learning in other classes.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

When the school was inspected in 1997 there were six key issues:

1. Improve standards and staff training in information technology.
2. Improve standards in music.
3. Bring better provision for pupils with special educational needs, especially by the more precise identification of specific needs of individuals.
4. Overhaul the management structure of the school.
5. Improve assessment and record keeping systems.
6. Ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

During the last four years, the school has made good progress in improving the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report, although the work to improve assessment still continues. The quality of teaching and learning is now good. Standards in English are improving and pupils make good progress overall. Because there is shared determination to improve, the school has a promising future.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	B	B	B	A
mathematics	B	B	C	C
science	C	C	C	B

<i>Key</i>	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

*Similar schools are those schools with between 20% and 35% of the pupils entitled to free school meals.*

In the 2001 Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs), standards were above the level found in most primary schools in English and average in mathematics and science. In comparison to schools where a similar proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals, standards were well above average in English, above average in science and average in mathematics. Standards have fluctuated in recent years but all evidence now points to improved standards, particularly in English.

Inspectors judge that this year, as in 2000, standards are above average in English and average in mathematics and science. There has been good impact of the literacy and numeracy strategies and this has contributed strongly to the improvement in basic skills. Standards in other subjects are at the expected level apart from history, music and religious education where they are above average. The school has set challenging, but realistic targets for attainment in recent years and should meet those set for 2001.

All pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. The school caters well for high attaining pupils, including those with particular talents.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and they work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The school is an orderly place and although there are a number of pupils with challenging behaviour, staff are very successful in keeping order.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils develop into mature and sensible learners who enjoy very good relationships with other pupils and the adults in school. There are good levels of racial harmony in school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Levels of attendance are similar to those in most primary schools and are improving. Pupils are punctual to lessons and no time is lost in learning.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged 7-11 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

The school's investment in staff training has paid off because teaching and learning have both improved since the previous inspection. Inspectors observed 77 lessons or part lessons and judge that teaching is good overall. There is good teaching in all years and subjects in school. English and mathematics, for example, are both taught well and this helps pupils build knowledge and skills well in these two subjects. Well over a quarter of all lessons seen were of very good or excellent teaching quality. This is a higher proportion than is usually found in primary schools. Fractionally over one per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory.

There are many strengths of teaching, including teachers' subject knowledge, their expectations of work and behaviour and the effective teaching methods used. Some aspects of planning and everyday assessment are not as consistent as other aspects of teaching.

Learning quality is also good and pupils are hard working, cheerful learners who concentrate well and show much interest in their lessons. They develop as mature and responsible learners who can work independently when required. Pupils take a great deal of interest in their own work and they have good understanding of how well they are doing. The pupils enjoy their learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is well planned to give all pupils good opportunities to learn the necessary knowledge, skills and understanding in all subjects. The numeracy and literacy hours have been implemented and adapted well. Geography is not as well promoted in the curriculum as other foundation subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Teachers and classroom assistants give pupils with special educational needs good support. Because this is the case, they make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The pupils who do not speak English at home are supported well and they make good progress. They speak and write English effectively by the age of eleven.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils know what things are special and attractive, and they enjoy the works of famous writers, artists and musicians. They are sensible when faced with difficult choices, know right from wrong and work effectively with other people.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The pupils are well cared for and their safety is of prime concern. Ways to assess how well they are doing in their work are good in English and mathematics, but not as well developed in other subjects.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good. Parents are very pleased with what the school does for their children. They receive good quality information about the work, and take a positive role in the education of their children.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
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Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher leads the school with enthusiasm, determination and success and there is very good educational direction for the school. The deputy headteacher and other senior managers are successful in their management roles. Subject managers carry out their duties well and are ready for more responsibility in checking the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects. All staff share good commitment to improvement and, in general, things are done well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors have firm knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are well informed about its work. They have good grasp of the principles of <i>Best Value</i> and ensure that the school follows these well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and senior managers have good knowledge of the things that still need improvement and they track pupils' progress carefully. The school has made a good start in setting targets for groups and individual pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses its resources carefully and in the best interests of the pupils. Finance is managed and spent wisely. The accommodation is cramped in places. Staff development is a particular strength and the school deserves its <i>Investors in People</i> status.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school expects their children to do well.</li> <li>• Their children like school and grow into mature and responsible pupils.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and pupils make good progress.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The school is well managed and it responds well when parents have a query or concern.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils do not always get the right amount of homework.</li> <li>• There are not enough activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree wholeheartedly with the parents' very positive views of the school. In addition, they judge that levels of homework and the provision of activities outside lessons are both satisfactory although there are fewer educational visits than is usual.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Most pupils transfer from the infant school that shares the same campus and at that time, they have broadly average levels of skill and knowledge. There is, however, a wide range of attainment with an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current Year 3 classes. On the other hand, there is a considerable proportion of pupils whose attainment is above average, and a few who attain high standards. Overall, inspectors judge that standards in the current Year 6 classes are above average in English and average in mathematics and science. Standards are higher in the Year 5 and 4 classes, and these pupils are likely to do better when they take the Statutory Assessment Tests (SATs) than has been the case in recent years. Pupils make good progress through the school from their starting level in Year 3.

2. In the 2000 SATs, standards were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. Set beside the results from other schools where a similar proportion<sup>1</sup> of pupils was entitled to free school meals, standards were well above average in English, above average in science and average in mathematics. In all cases, the SATs results in 2000 were similar to the standards found by inspectors in the present Year 6 classes.

3. The school analyses the results of SATs carefully in order to judge where improvement is needed. It has set rigorous and accurate targets for each year group in English and mathematics and has achieved these in most years so far. It also looks likely to meet its targets for 2001 and is anticipating even better standards in 2002 and 2003.

4. The school works very effectively to ensure that all pupils, regardless of background, are included in its successes. There has been some variation in the performance of boys and girls in SATs in recent years, particularly in mathematics and science where boys did significantly better than the girls. The school was quick to spot this trend and has taken good steps to even up standards between boys and girls. During the inspection it was judged that, overall, boys and girls work at similar rates, show comparable interest and motivation and do equally well.

5. A significant proportion of pupils come from homes where English is an additional language. These pupils are represented in all attainment groups in school, as seen in the English and mathematics sets. Some attain at high levels, others have special educational needs. Inspectors observed nothing to suggest that pupils from different ethnic backgrounds and those who speak languages other than English at home are doing any better or worse than other pupils did. Like their English-speaking friends, these pupils make good progress and they are confident and accurate users of English by the time they leave school.

6. The school has established good systems to advance the work of pupils with special educational needs. Because the support given to these pupils is good, they settle well to their work and they make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs attain standards that are very respectable for them.

7. Pupils with particular academic talents are included on the school's register of special educational needs. They have individual education plans to identify the specific work programmes suitable to ensure they are taxed enough. Parents of these gifted and talented pupils are very pleased

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<sup>1</sup> Hamstead Junior School is compared to other primary schools with between 20 and 35 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals.

with this academic provision and say that their children do very well in school. Inspectors agree, and judge that the gifted and talented pupils are stretched well and the standards they reach are high. One or two pupils are likely to reach level 6 in SATs by the age of eleven.

8. Other high attaining pupils are also given fair chances to do well. The setting system in mathematics is having a major influence on the success of pupils who are capable of good standards, even if they do not have particular gifts. The work set is challenging and motivating and high attaining pupils in Year 6 work comfortably at level 5. The school is trialling the use of setting in English in the current Year 5. This also shows good promise in the provision of work that is accurately matched to the capabilities of the pupils. The school is to decide whether to extend setting in English to other years once it has evaluated the effectiveness of the present trial. This is indicative of the care that the school takes to ensure that pupils reach their personal best.

9. The setting system also serves those pupils with average attainment well. In most cases, these middle attainers are taught in small sets and that this is helping to boost their chances of achieving the targets set for them. The school is also successful in raising standards by the use of additional literacy sessions and booster classes. Where pupils are not set or placed in ability groups, provision of work that is well matched to the pupils' needs is good and all pupils make good progress in their studies.

10. Standards and rates of progress in the eleven subjects inspected are summarised in the following table:

*Standards and progress as judged during the inspection*

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Standards</b>	<b>Progress</b>
<b>English</b>	Good	Good
<b>Mathematics</b>	Satisfactory	Good
<b>Science</b>	Satisfactory	Good
Art and design	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Design and technology	Satisfactory	Good
Geography	Satisfactory	Good
History	Good	Good
ICT	Satisfactory	Good
Music	Good	Good
Physical education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious education	Good	Good

11. Detailed discussion of these judgements is to be found in *Part B* of this report (Paragraphs 67-138). In all, pupils achieve at good levels personally, given their starting point and standards have become more consistent across classes in the same year group and have improved since the previous inspection. The school is well placed to bring even better standards in the future and is determined to do this.

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

12. The pupils have a very good attitude to school life. They have a high opinion of their school and enjoy going there, a point confirmed by almost all parents.

13. In the classroom pupils settle down quickly and are very eager to learn. They are attentive, keen to participate and are very well motivated. They concentrate well and work very hard. They have a pride in their work resulting in neat presentation and well looked-after books. Pupils are enthusiastic when discussing what they have learnt.

14. Behaviour is good. The school is orderly and the atmosphere is conducive to learning. Pupils know and understand the well-publicised school rules and take seriously the acquisition of rewards for good behaviour. The behaviour of some pupils is at times challenging although the staff are very successful in keeping good order. Behaviour in assembly is very good and pupils show the correct respect during prayers. Behaviour in the dining room is good; however the noise levels in the dining room are too high to allow easy conversation. Table manners are good. The playgrounds have a very happy and friendly atmosphere. Pupils report that they have no concerns about oppressive behaviour. They consider that neither bullying nor racism are problems within the school. However if an incident occurs they know who to speak to and express confidence in the staff's ability to sort out any problem. In the last year there was only one temporary exclusion.

15. Racial harmony in the school is good. Pupils of different races mix very well together both in the classroom and in the playground. They show a very clear respect for the different beliefs represented within their midst. This ranges from their appreciation of different faiths during assembly, to the respect they show to each other's views and values – very apparent during a religious education lesson when Hindu shrines were being discussed.

16. Relationships in the school are very friendly. Pupils are polite and courteous. They get on very well with each other and with the staff. Pupils are used to working together and collaborate very well in pairs and larger groups; a good example was in a Year 6 geography lesson when pairs of pupils were successfully studying features of the River Severn. They worked well together in groups to list what they knew and exchanged ideas and suggestions in a good natured way. This contributed well to the rate of progress being made.

17. Pupils mature well during their time at the school – a fact favourably commented on by the vast majority of parents. By the time pupils are in Year 6, they are interesting to talk to and are beginning to form their own opinions. They take responsibility for their own work and when given targets show a keenness to achieve them. Opportunities for additional responsibility are taken with enthusiasm. For instance the pupils act as first aid assistants at lunchtime and help to run the school tuck shop. After-school clubs are well attended.

18. Overall the very positive attitudes to school and the very good relationships (both of which have improved since the previous inspection) combined with the good behaviour provide a very good basis for the pupils' learning.

19. Attendance at the school is satisfactory. The rate for the previous school year is similar to the national average for primary schools. More recent data indicates an improvement. In the autumn term 2000, every class achieved a higher attendance figure than a year earlier. Unauthorised absence is insignificant. Punctuality is very good. Registration is prompt and efficient. Lessons start on time.

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

20. The judgement of the inspection team that teaching is good at Hamstead Junior School is reinforced by the work completed by pupils in the months before the inspection. It is evident that pupils are as well taught in October, and June, say, as they are in inspection week. Senior managers have maintained a very good emphasis on improving teaching and learning and the staff development programme has seen major successes. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and this has influenced learning considerably.

21. Learning is good. Pupils work hard in lessons. Inspectors saw many instances of a purposeful buzz to learning. Pupils want to share their successes and they do this as much with visitors as they do the staff and other pupils. On several occasions an inspector entering a classroom was seized by a group of pupils who wanted to explain what they were doing and to show how well they were progressing. The pupils in the combined Year 3/4 were insistent that the inspector looked closely at their printing techniques in their art and design lesson as they happily coated cotton reels and wooden blocks with poster paint. They shared their experiences with each other, compared results and talked about the effect that the use of less paint had on the print quality. They emphatically preferred the results when *lots* of paint was used! The level of creative effort in this lesson was very good.

22. In other lessons, pupils show a similar lively interest, concentrate well and work independently. In this way, pupils develop as mature and sensible learners and can be relied upon to behave well and relate very well to each other and the staff. In a Year 4 design and technology (DT) lesson, the pupils worked effectively in groups to produce pop-up illustrations for a child's story book. They talked amiably to each other about the techniques used, they worked carefully and were able to make sensible suggestions of how to improve their work. All this took place whilst the class teacher was working with a number of pupils in another part of the room. The finished products were of good quality and when assembled, the book is likely to be well produced and attractive.

23. These two examples are by no means rare. During the inspection, 77 lessons or part lessons were observed. Of these, 27 per cent were judged to show very good or excellent teaching and learning. Just one lesson (fractionally more than one per cent) was of unsatisfactory teaching and learning and all the others were judged satisfactory. There is good teaching and learning in each class, every subject and for different groups of pupils.

24. Strengths of teaching far outweigh the aspects that require enhancement. Particular qualities of teaching are:

- Teachers' subject knowledge.
- The teaching of basic skills, especially in English and mathematics.
- Good levels of expectation.
- The effectiveness of teaching methods.
- The management of pupils and the organisation of lessons.
- The brisk pace and efficient use of time in lessons.
- Support staff have a major impact on the good rates of progress made in lessons.

25. School managers are concerned to continue the improvements made to teaching and learning and they accept that the following aspects of teaching, whilst satisfactory, could be even better:

- ❑ The identification in planning of the specific knowledge, skills and understanding to be learned in lessons.
- ❑ More consistent use of marking to show how work can be improved.
- ❑ The use of the end of the lesson to review learning.

26. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by class teachers and learning support assistants. Teaching is good and pupils make good progress. Teachers know their pupils well and plan activities that are matched to their needs. Support staff are used effectively. Records of gains in skills, knowledge and understanding are kept and progress is carefully monitored.

27. Those pupils from homes where English is an additional language are also well taught and this results in good learning. Teachers value the contribution that pupils from different cultures bring to the school. For example, in a Year 3 religious education (RE) lesson, all the pupils improved their knowledge, understanding and respect for the Hindu faith when one girl explained her own form of worship. They were all fascinated by the description of her personal shrine and the rites that are focused upon this.

28. Teachers and support staff have developed very effective ways of keeping pupils informed of how well they are doing in lessons. The pupils are also keen to find this out themselves. In a Year 3 music lesson, for example, the pupils were mastering the technique of keeping the rhythm of three beats in a bar. More than this, they had to pick up a stick on the first beat and put it down on the third. Missed beats were *heard* and the teacher *talked* about them or gave *visible signs* to the pupils as they worked. They tried hard to do things in sequence and rhythm, *listened* carefully to the results and afterwards *discussed analytically* what they had heard. Following more practice, the work became more challenging as the teacher asked them not just to put the stick down on the third beat, but to place it in front of the pupil to their left. When doing this, the pupils concentrated hard in order to do it correctly and also to check that they were right. Accuracy and precision of skills increased substantially as a result.

29. Homework is used effectively in most classes to support literacy and numeracy, where it is set, collected and marked regularly. This is inconsistently applied across the school, however. The provision of homework in other subjects is satisfactory, although again, it is sometimes inconsistent.

30. Learning is usually fun, as in the above Year 3 music session. The sense of enjoyment and enthusiasm in many lessons is evident as soon as the visitor enters the classroom. This combines successfully with the purposeful and productive nature of learning to ensure that all pupils make good progress from the first to the last day in school. Overall, the school well deserves its *Investors in People* status as this significantly benefits teachers and pupils and teaching and learning.

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

31. The school has improved curricular provision since the last inspection in 1997. At that time, it was judged to meet all the requirements of the National Curriculum except in music and to provide satisfactorily for the teaching of religious education. Although there was an appropriate range of subjects, the amount of time allocated to each subject did not provide a balanced curriculum across each week.

32. Since then the school has ensured that all subjects are time-tabled sufficiently, with good coverage. Teachers' professional development has had a strong impact on the improvements. The staff have worked hard to implement very successfully the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, while continuing to develop appropriate provision for the other subjects through the use of nationally and commercially produced schemes of work. Standards in English have in consequence remained above average, and are improving in mathematics. Provision for music has improved significantly, and there are more consistent opportunities in information and communication technology (ICT). Geography provision remains in need of further development, as new units of study are implemented.

33. The school's success in promoting high achievement is strengthened by the very good provision for pupils' personal development, and by the commitment of the staff to the effective teaching and learning policy, with its focus on teachers working closely with particular groups of pupils in some parts of each lesson. This enables pupils to develop impressive collaborative and independent learning skills in all areas of the curriculum, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Opportunities to show responsibility and initiative beyond the classroom are limited, however. Teachers in the lower school, particularly, are beginning to forge good links across the curriculum. There is satisfactory provision for health and sex education involving the school nurse and the school is in the process of agreeing a policy for drugs education.

34. Teachers plan the curriculum thoroughly and evaluate it regularly. Subject managers monitor their subjects through teachers' comments and through pupils' work, but at present this is insufficiently used to revise the planned curriculum other than in English and mathematics. Consequently, pupils sometimes repeat units of work in some subjects such as science, and some managers' influence on the development of their subject is limited. More work needs to be done to adapt the new study units to the school's specific needs, to ensure that there is progression in pupils' learning in all subjects as they move through the school.

35. Pupils' learning is satisfactorily supported by the provision of after-school and lunchtime clubs such as football, netball, choir and drama. Pupils have recently taken part in local festivals of singing, and Year 6 were regional finalists in a drama production recently. All pupils enjoy a residential Arts Week when they are in Year 5, and groups also spend weekends at an outdoor pursuits centre nearby. There are no educational trips to enhance the curriculum, however, and few visiting speakers to the school. This is an important area for development.

36. The school has good links with nearby schools, organising appropriate transfer arrangements when Year 6 move to secondary school, and when Year 2 are due to transfer from the infant school. There are also good links with local industry, providing useful opportunities for pupils to experience the world of work.

37. Equal opportunities are well supported. When pupils are withdrawn from lessons, for example for music tuition, the school takes appropriate steps to minimise the effect on other areas of the curriculum. There are good procedures in place to identify pupils for whom English is an additional language, and very effective support available for those who may need it. This



demonstrates substantial improvement since the last inspection when this was deemed an unsatisfactory area.

38. Clear guidelines are in place for responding to pupils with special educational needs. These are about to be revised in line with the new Code of Practice. Special needs pupils are given as many opportunities as the others are to be involved in all areas of the curriculum, particularly in developing their basic skills, knowledge and understanding. A Year 3/4 class caters specifically for pupils with special educational needs in these year groups. The majority of pupils are supported within their class, with most classes benefiting from additional classroom support. Pupils complete tasks set by class teachers and indicated in the individual educational plans, which are reviewed regularly, usually on a termly basis. The targets on the individual educational plans are not always as specific as they might be. On occasions, pupils may be withdrawn when ICT is used to enrich the learning experiences. Work for pupils with special educational needs is often different from that of other pupils, though it is entirely appropriate.

39. The school makes very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. In particular, the very good opportunities now offered for spiritual development represent a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are actively encouraged to think about the fundamental questions of life, to express wonder at the world around them and to reflect on the dilemmas that face them. Those in Year 5 consider 'Heaven' and what it is like. Year 3 pupils think about the nature of worship and one boy writes that '*we worship to fill our souls*'. This is a profound statement and pupils are uninhibited in expressing such insights in lessons, particularly during religious education, reflecting the very good relationships that exist in classes. Pupils feel secure in expressing beliefs, values and opinions in the knowledge that their classmates will respect what is said.

40. High quality assemblies also give opportunities for pupils to explore thoughts about what is happening in the world, to reflect and pray in acts of collective worship and to have time to be quiet in the midst of the hectic schedule of lessons. Assemblies convey a real sense of the school community coming together and enjoying the experience. They are based around a weekly theme and convey strong moral messages making reference to the Christian tradition and to the values and beliefs of other faiths. During the inspection, the local vicar, who takes assemblies regularly, talked about St Paul as a hero of the Christian faith and another assembly centred on a Sikh Guru who is a hero in that religion. Pupils reflected purposefully on the nature of heroism and on modern heroes such as Nelson Mandela.

41. As at the last inspection, there is very good provision for pupils' moral development. There is a consistent school approach to incidents of inappropriate behaviour and pupils clearly know right from wrong. Teachers actively praise the positive attitudes that pupils display in their behaviour and work and there are suitable rewards each month in the form of 'caring' certificates for the best efforts. All classes display clear rules to guide behaviour and charts on which merit points are recorded. Recently, there has been a concentrated programme to address bullying and a road-show presented by '*Big Dave*' has left a lasting impression.

42. The provision for social development was judged very good in the last inspection report. It is now judged to be good. In lessons, pupils are given many opportunities to work collaboratively and they do so productively. However, outside lessons, there are limited opportunities to practise their social skills. The range of clubs and educational visits is not as extensive as in many schools. There are hardly any visits connected with history topics for example. However, the school does offer residential experiences for most Year 5 and Year 6 pupils, one of which gives them the chance to take part in adventurous activities that require teamwork and co-operation. Fund-raising for a charity each year is a long-established tradition and an impressive amount for a national children's charity was raised last year. Collections are also made to help with global disasters when they occur, for

example, to alleviate suffering in the recent Indian earthquake. Pupils carry out their school or class responsibilities conscientiously such as preparing the hall for assemblies or carrying crates of lunch-boxes to the designated storage area.

43. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good and this is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Religious education provides pupils with a good understanding of the traditions and beliefs of Christians, Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus and various religious festivals are celebrated in school. The arts subjects are well promoted in the school and Year 5 pupils recent residential experience gave them exciting opportunities to explore drama, art and music. In school, pupils study the work of famous artists such as Lowry and Andy Warhol. Through music, they learn songs from other countries and sing confidently the African and English words of a song in assembly. Year 3 pupils in their literacy lessons are studying books from countries as far afield as China, Africa and India. History contributes to an understanding of how our modern culture has evolved but geography is not strongly promoting a secure insight into how people live in contrasting areas of this country and in the rest of the world. Drama plays an important part in school-life. School productions are highly praised and the school reached the regional final of a Christian festival to celebrate the millennium last year at the Birmingham Symphony Hall. The choir too has a good reputation locally and took part in the Christmas Festival for primary schools.

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

44. The school has good procedures for the care of the pupils. It is a happy community where the pupils' welfare has a high priority. The headteacher and staff know the pupils well, respect them as individuals and listen attentively to any concerns they may have. Pupils are well supervised at all times. The school is a friendly and secure environment.

45. Child protection procedures are good. Three senior members of staff have been trained and all staff are familiar with the school's procedures. Health and safety are taken seriously. The responsible person has been trained, the premises are formally inspected at least once a year, safety is stressed in lessons and all equipment is regularly checked. There is adequate first aid cover and good records are kept of all accidents.

46. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The registers are well kept and the data is easily accessible. There are clear procedures for recording and following up absences. The school encourages good attendance by issuing certificates termly and annually. Attendance figures are improving, although the school has no published target to aim for. Parents are kept very well informed on their child's overall attendance with a print-out of the complete year's attendance record attached to the child's annual report.

47. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The school rules are easy to understand and very well publicised. All staff apply the procedures consistently. Good behaviour is positively recognised and celebrated both in the classroom and at regular assemblies. Detailed records are kept of incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Teachers handle incidents any of inappropriate behaviour effectively.

48. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. Bullying and racism are not tolerated. This is well understood by the pupils. Assemblies and whole class discussions are used effectively to drive home the message. Pupils know that they should speak to a teacher if they have any concerns. Any incidents reported to staff are followed up promptly. The school's procedures are considered very effective by the vast majority of parents and have their confidence.

49. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. The teachers know their pupils very well. Detailed records are kept and regularly updated. These are used well to write the high quality sections on personal development in the pupils' annual reports.

50. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. The school has a senior teacher with responsibility for assessment and he takes his role very seriously. In English and mathematics procedures are good, with detailed tracking of how well each pupil is doing. These records start with the infant school national assessment results and include results from subsequent yearly tests. In mathematics throughout the school, these records are used effectively to form class sets based on attainment. Setting in English is being tried experimentally in Year 5 but it is too early to form a judgement on its effectiveness. Target National Curriculum levels are established for each pupil each year in English and mathematics and pupils know at what level they are working. In English in Year 6, a system of more detailed targets for each pupil has recently been introduced. These targets are matched against individual work and when achieved the pupil is issued with a ticket stating the level of achievement. Pupils are enthusiastic about the system, but it is too early to evaluate its contribution to their learning. Assessment in the other subjects is less developed. This was a key issue in the previous report and has not yet been fully addressed, in part due to the recent changes in the National Curriculum. There are few consistent procedures in place to assess skills, knowledge and understanding in subjects outside English and mathematics. School managers accept the need to develop the systematic use of assessment in all subjects and they are beginning to draw on the strengths already established in the two core subjects in extending such good practice. Marking is generally good and all teachers follow the same procedures. Books are regularly monitored by senior staff to ensure consistency.

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

51. Parents think very highly of the school, which is over-subscribed. Inspectors were left in no doubt at the pre-inspection meeting for parents and with the response to the questionnaire that the overwhelming majority of parents are very pleased with what the school does for their children. They particularly like the school's high expectations, the approachability of the staff, the good teaching, and pupils' good behaviour, the progress made by their children and the way they mature. Parents consider the school to be well led. The inspectors wholeheartedly agree with these positive views.

52. Some parents had concerns about homework. Inspectors found that overall the quantity and quality of the homework are satisfactory. Some parents would like more activities outside lessons. The school offers opportunities for sports, music and drama outside the curriculum and the inspectors found this satisfactory. However the number of educational visits is less than is often offered to pupils of this age.

53. The quality of information parents receive is good. Both the prospectus and the governors' annual report are easy to read and informative. New parents are given a set of booklets giving them a good introduction into the school. Half-termly newsletters are informal and friendly and keep parents well informed on the life of the school. Formal opportunities for parents to discuss their child's progress are good, with consultation meetings every term. However parents are not given regular information on what is going to be taught. The quality of pupils' annual reports is very good. They are easy to read and give a very honest picture of a child's strengths and weaknesses. Progress and what a child needs to do to improve are both clearly stated. These reports are very useful for a parent who wants to be involved in their child's learning. Unusually, they also contain the complete attendance record of the child. If a child has special educational needs, parents are fully involved in the drawing up of individual education plans, however the targets are not clear enough. Deficiencies in certain documents sent to parents, identified as a key issue in the previous inspection, have been fully corrected.

54. Parents are well involved in their children's learning primarily through listening to their reading at home and supporting them in other homework such as spelling. This has a positive impact on the progress made by their children. There is an active parents' association that successfully combines social events with fund raising.

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

55. The good and very good things found in school, as identified in the above sections, are due to the very good quality of leadership and management. These have improved well since the previous inspection and are a fundamental strength of the school.

56. The headteacher is determined that the school moves forward at all times. In evaluating success and weakness she urges the staff to *justify or rectify* results and this permeates the school to the benefit of teaching, learning and standards. The headteacher gives excellent personal leadership to the school and is a highly effective manager. She has created a very good team spirit in school and all staff work very hard to give the best to the pupils. All share the commitment to improvement and there is a very good level of consistency in most of the things done in school. Standards have been sustained at the levels judged in the 1997 inspection report, and in many cases they have improved or are more consistent across classes as a result of this firm direction.

57. The deputy headteacher forms a very good partnership with the headteacher. He successfully manages a class full-time, but also give a clear lead to staff in many aspects of the school's work. Senior managers are developing well in their role as overseers of teaching, learning, the curriculum and standards across the school. They have good, and improving, insights into these things and are increasingly influential in encouraging change and improvement.

58. Subject managers are hard working and can show many successes in the development and improvement of their individual subjects. Some have been deeply involved in the programme of checking and evaluating standards, teaching and learning in other classes, but this has not yet extended to them all. Subject managers are a talented team and are ready for the demands that a more evaluative role will bring.

59. Provision for special educational needs is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has worked hard to develop his professional skills in this aspect. The co-ordinator maintains the register of pupils' efficiently. He shares expertise with staff and ensures the training of all support staff. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked. Outside agencies are involved as required and the governing body is well-informed, particularly about issues of inclusion<sup>2</sup>, by the headteacher, the special educational needs co-ordinator and the responsible governor who gives good support. Pupils' needs are well met as a result of this good management.

60. Effective management is also extended to the provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language. This is well co-ordinated to provide good opportunities for the development of spoken and written English and the targeting of support in lessons.

61. The governors also take a central role in the management of the school. They discharge all their duties well. The programme of visits and links with individual teachers serves the governors well. They have very good knowledge of the strengths and shortcomings of the school and they are well involved in the identification of priorities and checking that the school provides challenge and compares well with other schools. In this way, they apply the principles of *Best Value* well.

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<sup>2</sup> Educational inclusion is the provision made by the school for pupils of all backgrounds and abilities. It especially includes judgements about the level of racial harmony.

62. Over the four years since the previous inspection, school managers have developed a good system of checking and evaluating both how well pupils are doing and the effectiveness of school systems and procedures. They know that there is yet more to be done to hone this into a monitoring and target setting system that is second to none. Some elements of the process are ripe for continuing improvement:

- ❑ Drawing all staff into the process of monitoring standards, teaching and learning.
- ❑ Extending the good model of assessment in English and mathematics to all subjects.
- ❑ Refining the process of setting individual and group targets for learning and extending it to all classes.

63. In doing this, the school can reflect on its successes:

- ❑ The setting of challenging and accurate targets for attainment in SATs.
- ❑ Achieving these targets.
- ❑ Including gifted and talented pupils in the school's effective special educational needs provision.
- ❑ Developing good models of monitoring and evaluation and assessment in English and mathematics.
- ❑ Evolving a promising system of performance management that sets personal targets for members of staff.
- ❑ Devising and implementing a programme of staff development that builds on strengths and brings a concerted effort to eliminate weaknesses.
- ❑ Establishing very good means of communicating essential information.

64. The school uses the available funding wisely in catering well for the needs of all pupils. Money is targeted carefully to support improvements in educational provision and additional funding is directed successfully to improving progress and standards where it matters. The staff are one of two key strengths of the school. They are all well deployed and teachers, support assistants, lunch-time supervisors and administrative and cleaning staff all work hard to improve provision for the other key strength of the school, the pupils. The accommodation is cramped in places, but the staff are not prevented from using it effectively and presenting it attractively.

65. The school meets its aims and values very well. Targets are also accomplished successfully. This is due to the thoroughness of systems to ensure that people are valued, work efficiently and pull together. The school has improved well since the inspection in 1997 and it gives good value for money because of its many successes. It also has a bright future.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

66. Hamstead Junior School is a successful school. All staff and the governors work hard to give the pupils a good deal. There are three main areas where improvements can be made, but the school recognises these and is determined to do what is needed. The school is in a good position to move forward and is ready for the challenge to:

### **1. Ensure that geography has a firm place in the curriculum and that pupils have the necessary opportunities to learn this subject well by:**

Making sure that the progression of skills and knowledge is identified clearly in planning;  
Assessing and tracking the progress made by pupils;  
Checking that there is consistent provision across year groups.

See paragraphs 32, 43 and 102 to 107.

### **2. Extend the strengths of assessment in English and mathematics to all other subjects by:**

Introducing effective assessment procedures in all subjects;  
Making learning objectives more specific in planning;  
Giving targets in individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs more focus;  
Using the results of assessment to shape the planning for future work;  
Enhancing and extending the promising start made to target setting and sharing for individuals and groups of pupils;  
Using the closing moments of lessons to review the targets set for pupils during that session.

See paragraphs 50, 62, 94, 100, 106, 111, 120 and 134.

### **3. Give all subject managers a role in the process of checking and evaluating standards, teaching and learning by:**

Introducing a planned cycle of monitoring of standards, teaching and learning that involves all subject managers;  
Communicate the findings of this programme effectively so that all can share the outcomes.

See paragraphs: 34, 58, 62, 88, 94, 101, 107, 111, 128 and 134.

In addition, the following minor issue should be incorporated in the governors' action plan:

- **Enhancing the programme of educational visits and visitors to school.**

See paragraphs: 35, 42, 54, 105 and 138.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	77
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	49

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	26	54	18	1	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	324
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	65

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	102

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	43

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.2

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	37	53	90

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29	27	32
	Girls	47	37	46
	Total	76	64	78
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (75)	71 (76)	87 (82)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	26	31
	Girls	45	41	46
	Total	73	67	77
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (78)	74 (78)	86 (81)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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



### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	36
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	51
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	1
White	217
Any other minority ethnic group	17

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.0
Average class size	29.0

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	135

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	529 734
Total expenditure	508 394
Expenditure per pupil	1 589
Balance brought forward from previous year	25 127
Balance carried forward to next year	46 467

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	324
Number of questionnaires returned	99

### **Responses (percentage of answers in each category):**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	65	31	2	2	0
My child is making good progress in school	54	40	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good	51	45	2	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	32	45	15	7	1
The teaching is good	51	45	3	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	46	44	8	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	61	36	0	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	65	34	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents	39	52	7	1	1
The school is well led and managed	52	39	4	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	51	41	6	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	16	43	30	3	8

Parents are very supportive of the school in these responses. Inspectors judge levels of homework to be satisfactory and the programme of activities outside lessons is similar to that found in most primary schools. However, the number of visits and visitors to enhance pupils' learning is not as numerous as found elsewhere.

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

### **ENGLISH**

67. In the SATs for 11-year-olds in 2000, standards were above the national average and well above average when compared with schools of a similar type. The school has improved the standards in English since the last inspection, with results over the past four years being consistently above the national average. A particularly impressive number last year gained the higher Level 5 and contributed to the school's target for results being exceeded. A lower target has been set this year, reflecting the school's view that fewer pupils will gain the higher level and that, overall, standards will fall. Inspection evidence suggests that standards are still, at present, above average. Inspectors agree that fewer pupils this year will achieve Level 5 but judge that more will achieve the expected standard than in most primary schools.

68. The National Literacy Strategy is now well embedded in the school with teachers showing a high degree of competence in planning and delivering lessons. The decision to have a separate time each day for reading is releasing time in the literacy hour to concentrate on writing and this is having a marked effect on standards. Work in other subjects too is contributing very well to the development of literacy skills. Speaking is particularly well promoted. In a geography lesson, the teacher emphasises the requirements for good public speaking and groups of pupils clearly and amusingly present their own explanation of the human water-cycle. Written work in a variety of subjects enables pupils to practise their skills. Year 4 pupils, for example, write clear evaluations of the animal faces that they have designed and made in their design and technology (DT) lesson. Information and communication technology (ICT) also supports work in English effectively and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Year 6 pupils use the computer to re-draft a letter complaining about a dangerous playground by altering words and rearranging sentences to make the arguments more forceful.

69. Standards of speaking and listening are better than those found in the majority of schools. Pupils are confident and keen to join in discussions. They use technical language as a matter of course. Eleven-year-olds talk about *conditional sentences* and *superlative adjectives* and those in Year 5 clearly explain the characteristics of a *simple* and a *compound* sentence. Pupils speak clearly and know that others must be able to hear them. Most teachers try to involve as many as possible in the discussions and not just those with their hands raised. This promotes good learning. By skilful questioning, some reluctant speakers in a Year 5 average and below average set are drawn into a discussion about an explanatory text. When one-word answers are given, the teacher asks a supplementary question to draw out more detail and encourages the pupils to 'give me a clue.' This indicates that, while teachers are good at promoting speaking skills, it is important to use every available strategy to improve standards still further, for example by using drama and formal debates in lessons.

70. Reading standards at eleven are above average. Teachers conduct regular reading sessions, taking a group each day to study a chosen text. They keep a record of how well each pupil performs against a selected objective, such as '*to read expressively*', and this enables them to diagnose the next step to improve performance. The school has an impressive number of these group reading books covering a wide range of styles – stories, poems and non-fiction for example. However, this cannot be said for the reading books that pupils take home. The library has just been subjected to a rigorous spring clean and many old, poor quality books have been discarded. This has left the school short of reading books and many pupils, particularly the older ones, are bringing books from home because of the poor choice available. Fortunately, most say they belong to the local library and have a number of their own books. This enables them to remain relatively unaffected by the problem in school. The library is situated in the main corridor and this makes it difficult for pupils to work there in small groups to develop their study skills. However, most pupils have satisfactory library skills. They say that they sometimes take the information books from the school library to their classroom for

research and can explain how the classification system works and how the index and contents page in a book help them to find specific information.

71. Most pupils say they enjoy reading. They have favourite authors and books – usually modern writers like Roald Dahl and J K Rowling. Classic fiction is not often mentioned, except by a Year 5 pupil who favours the ‘*Narnia*’ books of C S Lewis because ‘*I like magical stories*’. Above average 11-year-olds read fluently, accurately and expressively. They talk animatedly about the plot and predict what might happen. Average readers are less expressive in their reading but have few difficulties in attempting unknown words, breaking them into syllables and building them again using their knowledge of phonics. Most have the ability to deduce the meaning of words from their context. One girl who correctly infers the meaning of *discern* and *recessed* is then able to understand the sentence. Below average readers have appropriate material and, because of this, they make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are often following a specific structured reading programme and this encourages confidence in reading. Learning throughout the school is good. Phonics are well taught in the earlier years and some pupils are receiving extra help in small groups with trained classroom assistants who follow the Additional Literacy Strategy<sup>3</sup>. Work is focused on phonics to help reading in particular. There is no consistent approach to the records that are kept of books that go home. Individual teachers have their own system. There is, for instance, no school-wide reading diary that parents and pupils maintain as a check on what is read and the support given. Parents do however receive leaflets with information about how to help with reading at home and how reading is organised in the classroom.

72. Standards of writing are average overall for 11-year-olds but there is a wide range in the standards displayed in books in every year group. Work is very neatly presented throughout the school and teachers insist on high standards of handwriting and correct setting out of work. In Year 6, above average pupils write in paragraphs with correct punctuation and secure spelling of words like *consequently* and *communicate*. They use imaginative and exciting vocabulary including a good number of adverbs, particularly in writing speech. There is clear evidence of some work at the higher Level 5 and one or two talented pupils are likely to shine in the national tests this year. They produce particularly forceful letters complaining about a disastrous holiday using words like *appalled*, *atrocious* and *devastated*. Average pupils write equally forcefully but have difficulty with some spellings – confusing *their* and *there* for example – and mixing up tenses. Sentences are shorter and ideas not so well developed. Nevertheless, they are fluent writers and use appropriate vocabulary. Below average pupils write shorter stories. They often fail to describe settings or characters fully and find it difficult to think of original openings or endings for stories. Spelling too is difficult for some.

73. Progress in writing is good across the school. There is currently a focus on writing and a system of target-setting for individual pupils is being tried in Year 6. A ticket containing a target – perhaps ‘*I can write a story with dialogue*’ – is posted in the front of the writing book and is taken out when a pupil starts writing. This helps the pupil to focus on how to improve and the teacher marks the work making reference to how well the target has been achieved. When teacher and pupil agree that the target is met, another one is drawn up. This is an exciting experiment that is still to be evaluated. Another experiment is being tried in Year 5 with the above average pupils being grouped in a separate class for literacy. In their lesson, they are challenged well by the teacher to improve sentences by deleting words and substituting more powerful vocabulary, for example changing *big* for *colossal*, *enormous* or *gigantic*. The teacher feels that he can meet the needs of these pupils more easily in this setting but the school is not yet ready to evaluate the success of the venture. Most teachers are becoming adept at teaching the principles of good writing. In a Year 5 lesson with average and below average pupils, the teacher takes instructions for making chocolate and clearly demonstrates how joining words such as *secondly*, *next* and *finally* can improve the writing. This helps pupils in their learning because they are shown how they can improve their own work.

74. Pupils come into Year 3 with broadly average skills in English. They make good progress through the school including those who do not use English as their first language at home and those

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<sup>3</sup> The Additional Literacy Strategy is an intensive programme of short sessions for pupils who require extra help to improve their learning.

with special educational needs (for whom provision has improved significantly since the last inspection). Teachers in most lessons plan work well to meet the needs of all pupils.

75. Teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. Three-quarters of the lessons seen this time were good or better with one judged excellent. Very good relationships are a feature of nearly all lessons. Pupils feel secure and there is very little misbehaviour. On the contrary, pupils have a very positive approach to the lessons and are enthusiastic. They are usually told what it is that they are expected to learn and this focuses them on the task ahead. Teachers know their material thoroughly and have appropriate resources to deliver their lessons. Overhead projectors are particularly effective in displaying text so that all can see and join in with reading. Pupils know the classroom routines and, in an excellent lesson in Year 3, they work very well in independent tasks while the teacher supports a below average group. In the very good lessons, the pace is brisk and time limits are set for pupils to complete tasks. Teachers have high expectations of the quality and quantity of work and, in some lessons, they use classroom assistants well to support particular pupils. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, the definition of an '*explanation text*' is consolidated by the classroom assistant with four pupils who have special educational needs. A good summing-up session at the end of the lesson is a feature of good teaching too. Time is spent productively in a Year 5 lesson reinforcing the spelling of complex words that have been encountered in the work. Teachers mark work conscientiously and most are skilled at pointing out to pupils how they can improve their work. Not all however complete written evaluations of their lessons or note particular difficulties that individuals have encountered. Most teachers are skilful at questioning during the opening of a lesson to gauge the understanding that has already been acquired but individual difficulties are not always addressed.

76. The subject manager is new to the school this year. She is proving to be a very good leader and has quickly assessed the strengths and weakness of the subject and has observed teaching in every class. She is a very good practitioner herself and has a clear vision of what needs to be done to improve provision. Through a thorough analysis of test data, areas of weakness are identified and the thrust at present is on improving writing. Regular assessments of unaided pieces of writing against National Curriculum levels of attainment have just started that will help teachers to track progress. End-of-year tests and regular reading surveys also enable standards and learning to be assessed.

## MATHEMATICS

77. Educational provision and standards in mathematics have improved since the inspection in 1997 and are poised to maintain these advances. At first glance, a chart of SATs results over recent years shows a slight decline, but in reality, trends are positive and promising.

78. Standards in the 2000 SATs were not as good as in earlier years. From 1997 to 1999, standards were above the national average (B grade), but in 2000 they were similar to those found nationally (C). In comparison to schools with between 20 and 35 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals, they were also average. Inspectors judge that this year, SATs results will also be average, but that in the following years, they will rise again. This pattern is summarised in the following table:

*Standards in past mathematics SATs and inspectors' judgements of standards in future years*

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Actual results	B	B	B	C				
Likely results					C	B	B	B
					Year 6	Year 5	Year 4	Year 3

*C refers to average standards, B to above average standards. Other grades may be used, as in the key to the Standards chart on page 8.*

79. The two C grades in the above chart have common factors. Both last year, and this, there are above average proportions of pupils with numeracy targets on individual education plans to support their special needs. Twenty three out of eighty five pupils (27%) have such targets in Year 6 this year. The remaining pupils are likely to gain level 4 or above when they take the SATs; this is a slightly higher proportion than last year and is likely to mean standards are similar to the average found nationally.

80. The expected improvement in standards from 2002 onwards is due to the greater proportion of higher attaining pupils in those year groups. The system of setting pupils according to capability is working well in the interests of all pupils in school. Thus, the higher attainers are set work that is well matched and taxing. Meanwhile, average attaining pupils are taught in smaller groups to ensure they make the required progress. The lower attainers, including those with special educational needs, are given additional and very effective support by the well trained and capable support assistants. The few pupils with particular talents in mathematics are also challenged well and have individual education plans to ensure that their work is always at the right level. Level 6 in mathematics is not beyond the reach of these pupils. The setting of pupils throughout the school reflects the demanding and accurate targets set for each year group.

81. Boys and girls generally make similar, good, progress. Inspectors saw no signs of the differences in attainment between boys and girls that were present in the 1997-9 SATs results.<sup>4</sup> The school has analysed boys' and girls' results carefully and has targeted the girls carefully to ensure they do as well as the boys. There were no significant differences in the 2000 results and inspectors judge that current attainment is similar for boys and girls.

82. All pupils achieve well because the work in mathematics is structured carefully and the introduction and adaptation of the numeracy hours has benefited learning. Pupils are enthusiasts for mathematics; they enjoy their lessons and work hard. In most lessons seen, pupils show good levels of concentration and that they work independently and responsibly. Because pupils have very good

<sup>4</sup> In these three years, boys at Hamstead Junior School did significantly better than girls in the mathematics SATs.

relationships with staff, are keen to take part in activities and talk sensibly about their achievements, they build skills and knowledge well and have good insights into how well they are doing. This extends to all pupils, regardless of background, including those with special educational needs, the gifted and talented and those who speak English as an additional language.

83. Mathematics teaching is good. Staff have good levels of subject knowledge, they teach basic numeracy well, expect their pupils to do well and use effective teaching methods. Control and discipline are very good and time is used very well. The mental arithmetic sessions at the start of lessons are brisk and the speed of calculation is good because teachers demand instant responses. Some work is done against the clock, and this too speeds calculation. The support staff give valuable assistance to ensure that pupils work well and make good progress. Two things stand out for further enhancement of teaching:

- The more precise identification of the things to be learned in planning.
- The consistent use of comments when marking to indicate ways to improve.

84. The subject manager agrees with these priorities and is determined that standards and the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics will be as good as they can be. He leads and manages the subject most successfully and has been influential in the development of the good systems of assessment in the subject and the use of the information produced to set and share targets with the pupils. The subject manager has monitored standards, teaching and learning in all other classes and has good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and shortcomings of the subject. Mathematics has improved well since the previous inspection and is likely to maintain this rate of advance in the future. The subject manager has been central in this process.

## **SCIENCE**

85. Standards of attainment in science are in line with those expected for pupils at the end of Year 6. This is a similar situation to the results of the 2000 SATs where standards matched the average found in all schools and were above the average found in schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals. In the previous inspection report in 1997, attainment was judged to be above average. The change in standards reflects the school's recent priority in teaching the new national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and the subsequent reduction in the emphasis on science. The quality of teaching is good overall, and pupils generally make good progress as they move through the school. New national units of study have been introduced recently, but there are a number of improvements to be made in the way these are organised in order to achieve the highest possible standards by the time pupils move to secondary school.

86. Teachers plan in detail using study units that enable pupils to improve their skills in scientific enquiry. Through investigations pupils build up their knowledge and understanding as they conduct experiments. They work collaboratively, sharing ideas and equipment well as they predict outcomes and judge findings against their expectations. They make detailed diagrams of their experiments and label them appropriately, but some pupils find the requirement for great detail in these diagrams reduces their enthusiasm for science. Year 4 pupils can define solids, liquids and gases and this is built on in Year 5 when pupils experiment with different materials to discover which substances can be compressed. Year 6 know how to establish evidence of air exerting pressure on moving objects, and can readily explain what is meant by a fair test. They are able to talk about their experiments using appropriate scientific language such as resistance and surface area, and hold productive discussions on the need to take multiple readings when testing to see if weight affects the speed of a falling object. Pupils throughout the school have appropriate opportunity to record their evidence in a variety of ways, although as yet very little use is made of information and communication technology.

87. The quality of teaching and learning in science is good. Lessons move at a brisk pace, and all pupils participate with enthusiasm, showing excellent concentration and application. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are given effective support by classroom assistants and through the provision of well-structured work sheets. Review sessions at the end of lessons are often used well to reinforce the intended learning, and this method is particularly effective in enabling higher attaining pupils to move their learning forward. However, there is sometimes too much planned into a lesson to enable pupils to make the best use of their time. This occasionally causes confusion, limiting progress, as it did in a Year 6 lesson on air resistance and a Year 6 lesson on compression.

88. Teachers assess pupils' progress as they work, and records are kept of significant achievement or poor attainment. There is no record kept of the development of investigative skills, however. Consequently, pupils move through the units of study, but no specific work is planned to extend or remedy this area. There is also occasional repetition of the units, so that some pupils study the same topics twice with no significant benefit to their learning. For example, Years 5 and 4 both follow projects on the human skeleton, and the care of teeth is studied in Years 3 and 6. The subject manager checks year group planning, but at present there is no systematic monitoring of the effectiveness of provision across the school. Individual class teachers mark work thoroughly, with supportive comments, and a few set targets for future learning. There is a range of appropriate, good quality resources which are easily accessible and well used.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

89. Standards attained in art and design by the age of eleven are as expected for the age-group and pupils make satisfactory progress. Some higher attaining pupils achieve good standards of work. The standards found at the previous inspection have been maintained. Displays around the school indicate that pupils are offered a good range of experiences through a broad and balanced curriculum. The national guidelines for the art and design curriculum are currently being trialled which offer a structured approach through the systemic development of skills, knowledge and understanding. Not all teachers are confident with this new scheme of work.

90. The quality of teaching and learning in art and design is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning during the inspection was sometimes good and occasionally very good. Pupils enjoy the activities provided, which are both interesting and challenging. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils' experimented with block printing techniques, exploring shape, colour and pattern. Their knowledge of colour mixing was good. They designed patterns on potatoes of varying complexity and the more talented pupils created skilful and complex designs. Pupils worked carefully, giving thought to spacing and colour as they produced a repeat pattern on fabric. In Year 4, pupils constructed model chairs using rolled newspaper. They persevered well with a difficult task, incorporating design and technology skills, as well as problem-solving skills to help them complete the task. Very good teaching focused clearly on skill progression. High expectations and a demanding task challenged all pupils well. The paired working ensured support for lower attaining pupils.

91. Of note in the good teaching is the emphasis on clear instructions, skilful use of questioning and careful demonstration. Occasionally, the behaviour of some older pupils affects the progress being made. In a Year 6 lesson, the high noise level and fussing caused several interruptions to the lesson. Pupils were building on their previous work about urban landscapes having looked at work by Lowry and were focussing now on rural landscapes. Although pupils were provided with a photograph of a rural landscape there were missed opportunities to explore the work of landscape artists in this lesson. The brief plenary session allowed little time for pupils to evaluate the success of their work. In a good Year 5 lesson, pupils practised clay-modelling techniques to create and decorate a container. The teacher offered appropriate vocabulary such as 'slabbing', 'coiling' and 'indenting'. Pupils used a range of tools successfully and suggested improvements to their work in many cases.



The containers were attractive and well formed. Pupils were proud of the end result and achieved standards expected for their age. Good attention to the needs of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language ensures that they make similar satisfactory progress as other pupils in lessons. Most pupils are well motivated by the tasks. They listen carefully and follow instructions from their teachers, resulting in effective work that they enjoy. Most pupils show a good level of independence because teachers promote such skills well.

92. Sketchbooks are used well in most year groups to enable pupils to experiment with techniques and resources. Skills in observational drawing of artefacts such as those found in the local church during a visit by Year 3, and sketches of various of chairs by pupils in Year 4 show sound progression. These continue to improve in Year 5 with still life, compositions and careful drawings of flowers and solid shapes, using shading techniques to good effect. The effective marking of sketchbooks in Years 3 and 4 helps pupils to improve their skills and techniques further.

93. Pupils are introduced to the work of artists from different times and cultures. For example, pupils explore Greek pattern and design on vases when studying the Ancient Greeks. They paint in the style of Mondrian and make charcoal sketches in the style of Lowry. Printing techniques reflect the work of Andy Warhol. Such experiences extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of different cultures, and the skills and techniques used by different artists.

94. Art and design work is enhanced for older pupils during their residential visit to Ingestre Hall where pupils enjoy a range of arts experiences culminating in a drawing performance based on the Aztecs. One pupil wrote in her English account '*I was in for the time of my life!*' The co-ordinator manages the subject satisfactorily. She recognises that assessment in an area of weakness as is the monitoring of teaching and learning in order to have a secure understanding of the standards and progress being made.

95. Art and design makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

96. At the end of Year 6, attainment is at the expected level for the age. This is consistent with the findings of the last inspection. Boys and girls attain similar standards and make equal progress. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and pupils with special educational needs make the same good progress as all other pupils. Pupils achieve well when working with paper and glue to make pop-up cards in Year 4 and musical instruments in Year 6. There are good links with other subjects; for example, numeracy is reinforced when pupils measure straws with a ruler to make a tuned instrument and musical terms, such as 'pitch', are reinforced when evaluating their instruments. When designing pop-up books pupils use their ICT skills to create pictures of their characters. Pupils learn the design and technology process well as they move through the school. They plan designs for their work, listing the materials required and how they will be joined. When they have made their designs they evaluate them. However, the evaluation aspect of the process is less well developed by the end of Year 6. Evaluations of slippers they had made were restricted to how the decoration could be improved rather than identifying possible improvements to the design.

97. Pupils make good progress in developing the skills needed for making their designs. They gain experience of a range of materials and learn various joining techniques. High attaining pupils support other pupils in lessons. In Year 3 pupils make free-standing picture frames from paper and card and consider carefully its fitness for purpose and whom it is for. In Year 4 pupils make animal face calendars also using card but they make good progress by adding a switch and light emitting diodes to control lit-up eyes. In Year 5 pupils make good progress exploring food technology in a biscuit project evaluating biscuits before they design and make their own. Year 6 pupils make good progress in the use of textiles as they design and make a slipper. Progress is less secure in pupils' evaluation of their work, especially as they reach the end of the key stage.

98. Pupils enjoy DT lessons and they handle materials well and tools safely. Behaviour is very good and all pupils concentrate well and work hard throughout lessons. They collaborate well in pairs discussing their individual work as they make their musical instruments. They independently select the materials and tools such as straws and scissors when making. They independently offer opinions about their work and listen attentively to others explaining their ideas. Relationships both between pupils and between pupils and teachers are good and pupils' willingness to take responsibility for their work has a positive impact on learning.

99. Overall, the standard of teaching of DT is consistently good in all lessons seen. Where teaching is at its best teachers have good subject knowledge and there is good teacher intervention to move pupils' learning forward, for example, as they join straws of different lengths along a strip of card to make tuned musical instruments. They soon find out there must be room to blow down the straws. All teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons. This is reflected in the planning by the setting of appropriate lesson objectives that are shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons and referred back to as work progresses. These objectives are also used in the closing session where pupils reflect and identify whether or not they have achieved the objectives in their work. Pupils are well managed and discipline is good. Teachers know their pupils well and day-to-day assessment of their work is good, with effective recapitulation of prior learning as the lesson begins. Teaching at the time of the last inspection was identified as sound and now it is good, which is an improvement.

100. There is a whole school policy for DT and this year the school has introduced the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's (QCA) scheme of work for the subject, which is to be evaluated and refined as necessary at the end of the year. The units are delivered in blocks throughout the year. Teachers' planning together within year-groups ensures continuity and progression of the subject and equality of access for all pupils. Assessment is inconsistent. The school is trialling the use of the QCA end of unit statements as a means to record pupil achievement. Currently, however, this

does not give a clear picture of the skills, knowledge and understanding attained by all pupils and is therefore not effective in ensuring that pupil assessment informs subsequent planning.

101. The subject is well led by the subject manager who has established a clear educational direction for the subject throughout the school. She has led the introduction of the new whole school scheme of work and through the monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work she is aware of the weakness in pupils' evaluation of their designs. She has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching yet. There are adequate resources for learning in this subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

102. Year 6 pupils achieve the expected standards for the age-group. This is similar to the standards reported at the previous inspection. The provision for geography in its revised curriculum is not as strong as some other non-core subjects. Shared teacher planning in Years 3, 4 and 6 ensures that knowledge and skills are built progressively throughout these years. However, in Year 5 there are inconsistencies in the teaching of the work units with some repetition of content. Overall progress is good, as is that for pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs. All pupils achieve well in acquiring good mapping skills, for example, pupils in Year 3 study maps of the school and the local area creating keys. Year 6 pupils use maps and other secondary sources to explore physical and human processes, for example, when studying rivers. They also use ICT as they search the Internet to research information about flooding on the River Severn. They consolidate their ICT skills when they copy and paste appropriate text and images into their own documents to publish their geographical work. Places are well studied. For example, pupils in Year 4 study Sedbergh and contrast the area and a local school with their home area. In Year 5 they widen their experience and study the Indian village of Chembakolli, looking for similarities and differences with their own locality and school.

103. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils make better strides with their learning where teachers use innovative ways to deliver content. For example, groups of Year 5 pupils research what happens to water once it has been used and then use the style of public speaking to share their work with the rest of the class. In another class pupils working in pairs conducted an experiment to filter a mix of water and sand to explore ways in which water is cleaned. Both these lessons raised environmental issues very effectively. Year 6 pupils make good and sometimes very good progress in developing their mapping and research skills using secondary sources when studying rivers, focusing on the River Severn and its surrounding environment.

104. Where teaching is at its best teachers have good subject knowledge and engage pupils in activities well. The best lessons are characterised by good teacher intervention such as the use of skilfully framed questions that move pupils' learning forward, for example, when finding out about how chemicals are used to clean our water and the environmental issues that surround this. All teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons and this is reflected in the setting of appropriate lesson objectives within lesson planning. Pupils are well managed and discipline is good and well maintained throughout lessons. Teachers' use of resources such as books, maps and computers to demonstrate activities and techniques has a positive impact on learning. Teachers know their pupils well and day-to-day assessment of pupils' work is good. There is good recapping of prior learning before a lesson and good quality closing sessions ensure that all pupils reflect on the objectives of the lessons to see if they have achieved them. Teaching at the time of the last inspection was identified as sound and it is now good, which is an improvement.

105. There is a whole school policy for geography and this year the school has introduced the recommended national scheme of work for the subject. The school has made a good start in resourcing and implementing new blocks of work, such as the mountains unit. The school is now well placed to evaluate the scheme of work at the end of the year and to move forward to embed

geography into the whole school curriculum alongside other established subjects. The use of field trips to enrich this subject is still less than found in other primary schools, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils do visit the local shops and there is a field trip to the Sandwell Valley to study the River Tame. Also, some pupils have the opportunity to visit the Frank Chapman outdoor centre at Bewdley for a weekend residential stay. Homework set in this subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' understanding of how people interact with their environment. The way people use water on Saturdays and how family members earn their living are two examples of research homework set to broaden knowledge. In lessons, support assistants provide good support for less able pupils and for pupils for whom English is an additional language, which has a positive impact on their learning.

106. The programme of work in geography is not yet focused enough on the systematic development of skills, knowledge and understanding. The school is beginning to use the nationally recommended guidelines as a basis for curriculum planning, but this has not yet had time to take full effect. Assessment in geography is inconsistent because objectives for learning are not identified clearly enough in planning.

107. This subject is well led by the subject manager who has established a clear educational direction for the subject's development. Through the monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work she is well aware of the shortcomings within this subject area and is well positioned to lead geography forward. She has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching, which is a weakness. Resources for learning are barely adequate but there are plans to improve provision with the introduction of new units of work.

## **HISTORY**

108. Attainment is above average by the age of eleven and pupils make good progress as they move through the school. This shows an improvement since the last inspection report, when standards were in line with national expectations, and is a reflection of good teaching engendering great enthusiasm for the subject.

109. Pupils cover a range of topics following recently introduced national schemes of work. In most year groups this is successful, as teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to inspire their pupils with exciting and effective teaching methods. This is particularly so in Year 3, where pupils study the Ancient Greeks, and make relevant comparisons with life today. Teachers give good guidance on historical interpretations as pupils discuss with their partners the changes in modern life after watching a video of ancient times. They are able to record these differences, and in a role-play session give some notion of how they might have felt as children of that era. In one lesson, Year 5 pupils dressed in Tudor costumes to explore the role of Sir Francis Drake, questioning him intelligently about his allegiance to Queen Elizabeth I. Some higher achieving pupils demonstrate very well developed knowledge and understanding.

110. No lessons were observed in Year 6, but discussions with pupils show they have a clear knowledge of significant events in Britain since 1948, and demonstrate a good understanding of the impact of changes in society, fashion, and music over four decades. They are able to use appropriate language to describe their learning, successfully evaluating fact-file accounts of events in their own words. Higher achieving pupils are able to deduce implications for modern life from learning about the past, with thoughts about child poverty and equality in society.

111. Although the quality of teaching is good overall, in a few lessons pupils' progress is not as strong. Limitations in subject knowledge for a few teachers means that the skills and knowledge to be taught are not identified clearly enough and work is sometimes more about writing things down, than the development of understanding of history. Assessment in all year groups is limited to teachers' observations of performance in class and marking of work, which is thoroughly carried out. There are

no records kept of pupils' skill development and, therefore no indication of pupils' progression from year to year. The subject manager monitors teachers' planning and checks pupils' work annually, but has not had opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. The introduction of effective assessment procedures remains an issue to be resolved. Resources are dated and barely adequate, but are carefully stored and easily accessible. There is some use made of appropriate ICT resources, and pupils develop good skills in researching evidence from these and from books.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

112. At the age of eleven, attainment is in line with national expectations and is better than the findings during the last inspection. The school has made significant improvement since the last inspection in ensuring that all pupils have equal entitlement across the full range of the ICT programme of study. All pupils are good independent users of ICT. They independently log onto the computer network and load applications and files; they save their work with appropriate filenames and print work when it is completed. All pupils have good mouse and key boarding skills and achieve well, for example, when using a word processor in literacy, to redraft letters using persuasive writing. In numeracy they handle a range of numeric data in a variety of applications including a spreadsheet, a database and graphing software. They can switch lights on and off using a control application. The use of cross-curricular ICT to support work in other subjects such as literacy, numeracy, design and technology and geography is a strength of the school.

113. Overall progress throughout the school is good and where ICT is used in literacy and numeracy it is sometimes very good. In lessons all pupils consolidate their skills, knowledge and understanding. Progress is best where pupils explore different menu options within the software to complete tasks, such as refining their editing skills when letter writing or refining their searching techniques when interrogating a database or using the Internet. Pupils in Year 6 make very good progress refining editing techniques to redraft letters in literacy. They also make good progress in accessing and searching the Internet independently to select, copy and paste appropriate text and images to publish their geography work about flooding in Bewdley. Year 5 pupils make good progress across a range of data-handling applications. They explore formulae in a spreadsheet and carry out complex searches using a database about birds. Year 5 pupils also make good progress in turning lights on and off when using control technology. Year 4 pupils interpret on-screen data to create bar charts and less able pupils also make good progress compiling a much simpler graph after interpreting a tally chart containing information about the colours of cars. Pupils in Year 3 make good progress in developing their editing skills by learning how to alter fonts and they also use borders to present their work on book characters. Across the range of ICT applications all pupils make good progress, including higher attaining pupils who are beginning to use cut and paste techniques to redraft their letters.

114. Progress is less secure in the modelling aspect of ICT. Pupils in Year 5 use a spreadsheet to see how many adults or children paying different amounts of money, could get on a bus, for a fixed total sum but opportunities to explore the idea of modelling within the work are missed and it becomes purely a data calculation activity.

115. Overall, the standard of teaching is good. Where teaching is at its best, teachers have good subject knowledge and a good working knowledge of the software applications used. The best lessons are characterised by good teacher intervention that moves pupils' learning forward both within the context of the ICT being used and with the subject matter as in the case of redrafting letters in literacy and searching the Internet for information in geography. Teaching is less satisfactory when opportunities are missed to demonstrate better options within the software to perform tasks and where modelling is not fully understood.

116. All teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons and this is reflected in the setting of appropriate lesson objectives within the planning and the differentiated tasks that are set, such as, in literacy. Pupils are well managed in the *Anne Lewis Computer Suite* and when using computers in the classrooms. Discipline is good and well maintained throughout lessons. Teachers' use of the video projector to demonstrate activities and techniques has a positive impact on learning, and resources in the computer suite are used well. Teachers know their pupils well and day-to-day assessment of pupils' work is good. There is good recapping of prior learning before a lesson and good quality plenary sessions ensure that all pupils reflect on the objectives of the lessons to see if they have achieved them. Some pupils use computers at home to word process, for example, to write about Heaven in religious education.

117. Teaching at the time of the last inspection was identified as sound and now it is good. This improvement is due to the commitment of all staff, the support of the headteacher and the hard work of the subject manager who has provided planned training to ensure staff development in this area.

118. There is a whole school policy for ICT and this year the school has introduced the QCA scheme of work for the subject. The ICT curriculum now covers the whole range of the programme of study including control and monitoring. Teachers' planning together within year groups ensures both continuity and progression of the curriculum and equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. These are improvements since the last inspection. Pupil's use of the Internet, including email, is not great, but this is to be addressed as soon as technical difficulties have been resolved.

119. In lessons, support assistants provide good assistance for pupils with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language. This has a positive impact on their learning not only in ICT and also, for example, in numeracy as they make their graphs. A support assistant also helps small groups of pupils control lights and this has a positive impact on the delivery of the ICT curriculum. There are two computers and specialised applications such as a spelling program which is well used in the special needs base.

120. The school has not yet devised a whole-school system of assessment of skills and knowledge in ICT. Whilst it has started to use the nationally recommended guidelines for planning, there has not been time enough for this to bring greater consistency to the process.

121. ICT is well led by the subject manager, who, with the support of the headteacher, has a clear set of priorities for the subject. The good quality of his leadership has a positive impact on the development of this subject throughout the school. He has monitored teaching in the past and is very aware of the standards being achieved in lessons. He has led very effective training sessions, which is evident in increased teacher confidence, now seen in the good quality teaching of ICT throughout the school.

122. ICT remains a priority on the school development plan and resources acquired both through the National Grid for Learning and school funds have had a positive impact on pupils' learning with the development of the timetabled networked computer suite and at least one computer in all classrooms. However, the use of classroom computers is generally not widespread and this is a weakness. Staff training through the New Opportunities fund still has to be organised and is a priority for next year. ICT resources for learning are good and the computer ratio of 1:8.5 is better than the national average.

## **MUSIC**

123. In the previous inspection music was a key issue. Attainment was below the level expected for eleven-year-olds and progress was unsatisfactory. Since that time standards have improved well and pupils now attain standards above those expected for their age. The expertise of the music co-

ordinator has contributed to the improved standards of singing and raised confidence in teachers through in-service training. Instrumental music tuition is of good quality and has a significant impact on the standards achieved by talented children. These pupils achieve well. They perform confidently in assemblies and demonstrate a mature approach towards their music.

124. By the age of eleven, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, have made good progress in their musical development. They create percussion parts to songs, perform simple compositions and sing in two parts. Pupils have a good musical vocabulary and understand terms such as 'ostinato' well. Singing is tuneful. Pupils understand 'loud' and 'soft' and know how music conveys feelings. They show good control of sound when singing and playing instruments. Pupils know the importance of correct breathing when singing. They learn musical notation, count beats in a bar and identify different rhythmic patterns. Pupils listen to a wide range of music from a variety of cultures and sing songs from different cultures. In assemblies for instance, pupils sing African songs of praise. They cope well with the language and singing conveys feeling. In other lessons, pupils sing in French and enjoy Caribbean songs. There is a good focus on multicultural instruments to support singing.

125. Listening skills are very good. All enjoy their music-making and respond enthusiastically. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language participate fully in lessons and gain much from their music-making. Pupils who attain higher levels in music are given good encouragement.

126. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good overall. When specialist teaching is involved it is very good. It is at least satisfactory in other classes. Music is taught by the co-ordinator in Years 3 and 4, who is a music specialist, and by class teachers elsewhere. The standard of music in the co-ordinator's classes is significantly higher because she uses her knowledge and expertise to challenge and extend pupils' creative abilities well. This was evident in a Year 4 lesson when pupils found their singing varies through effective use of a range of short songs. In these 'call and response' songs, pupils were confident, showing good awareness of pitch and rhythm. Basic singing skills were very well taught. Pupils were introduced to ostinati and were well challenged with tuned percussion, performing musical patterns well. There was a good balance of listening and appraising, performing and composing in this lesson and pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding were extended very well. Pupils showed good awareness of the combined effect of layers of sound, developed skills in reading musical notation and acquired new musical language. They learnt the difference between simple and compound time and extended their repertoire of songs. When appraising, pupils described the music using suitable vocabulary. The very good teaching in this lesson also contributed effectively to pupils' literacy skills. Pupils worked hard and learning was fun. Not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to improve their work and pupils are not always clear what the teacher is striving for because questions are not specific enough. Protracted explanations sometimes cause some pupils to lose interest.

127. Extra-curricular provision for music is sound. Pupils have the opportunity to sing in the choir and learn to play an instrument. They perform for senior citizens at Christmas and participate in local primary and secondary school festivals. Visits from Sandwell Youth Music and visitors such as the *Rainforest Man* in curriculum week, enrich the music curriculum.

128. The co-ordinator provides very good support to class teachers. A commercial scheme of work provides a good structure for music with a good focus on multicultural music. The co-ordinator has introduced a range of interesting instruments to support the scheme. She provides training for teachers which has increased staff knowledge and confidence. Although the co-ordinator checks progress and coverage of the scheme, monitoring of music is not yet fully effective and there is no clear overview of standards achieved. Music makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

129. Standards in physical education are average by the age of eleven. The sound standards attained in the previous inspection have been maintained. There is no difference in standards between girls and boys. The implementation of national guidelines identifies when skills and concepts within the subject's area will be taught, addressing a criticism of the previous inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school, including those pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

130. Pupils in all classes have a good understanding of the purpose of warm-up activities at the beginning of lessons. They understand the importance of exercise. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Occasionally it is good or very good. This is particularly so in dance, where in-service training has led to improved knowledge and understanding by teachers, resulting in better opportunities for pupils to develop skills and express their ideas creatively. In this better teaching, teachers have higher expectations.

131. In gymnastics, pupils perform balances, forward and backward rolls, with reasonable precision and control. By Year 6, most pupils hold a balance steadily, and are able to link a sequence of movements, using jumps, twists, rolls and turns. They work well with partners and in small groups, sometimes 'mirroring' or repeating their partner's performance. Higher attainers synchronise their movements well to produce an interesting, smooth sequence of movements, incorporating different levels and moving in different directions. In games, pupils achieve well because skills are carefully taught and systemically developed. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, the class teacher explained and carefully taught defensive tactics enabling pupils to intercept and deflect the ball. Pupils worked energetically, with interest and good control. The very good relationships and good behaviour enabled the lesson to progress well. Skilful demonstration and good focus on stance and position helped to improve pupils' accuracy. In a very good dance lesson, Year 5 pupils worked together in groups to develop a dance based on *Shoreline*. Pupils showed increasing co-ordination and control as they practised and refined their movements, expressing their ideas freely. All pupils participated well, working energetically and using descriptive language based on shells to inspire their movements. Boys and girls alike took pride in their dance work and produced high quality performances. Well-chosen musical resources contributed to the success of this lesson. By the time pupils are eleven, skills in self-evaluation are well developed. Pupils know how to improve their work. They demonstrate appropriate control, co-ordination and fluency in many cases. Pupils are able to work co-operatively when required. Occasionally, the pace of lessons is too slow and pupils do not work with sufficient effort in these lessons.

132. Year 6 pupils have some opportunity to swim and standards are average. Most pupils achieve the minimum 25 metres award by the time they leave the school.

133. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory support to teachers. She has ensured the successful implementation of the national guidelines and provided helpful training in dance that which has resulted in greater confidence when teaching dance. The scheme now ensures a systematic approach to the development of skills. Extra-curricular opportunities are satisfactory with opportunities for pupils to extend their skills in football, netball and skipping. Older pupils have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit to the Frank Chapman Outdoor Education Centre, where they enjoy a range of outdoor pursuits. There are no strategies for the formal assessment of pupils' progress. The co-ordinator does not have the opportunity to monitor how well pupils are taught. There are no formal whole school structures for recording achievement. No one has a clear overview of the standards achieved or the progress pupils make.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**



134. Standards at eleven are above those outlined in the Sandwell Agreed Syllabus and this represents an improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum is fully covered and topics are studied in depth so that pupils have good knowledge about religions, particularly about Christianity. Eleven-year-olds have looked at places that are special for believers – Lourdes for Christians and the Golden Temple of Amritsar for Sikhs. They have explored sacred texts including the Qur’an and the Bible and have written thoughtful and lengthy accounts of religious stories, some of them forming an impressive wall display in one classroom. In addition, they are encouraged to think about how religions affect our lives and what we can learn from them. They study the Ten Commandments and discuss how to rank them in importance for today’s society. All agree that ‘*Do not murder*’ is the most important rule but there is a mature discussion about the order of the others, with differing views about the importance of God in the lives of people today. This leads to some difficulty in ranking the commandments relating to God but indicates the depth of thought being given to the issues.

135. Pupils throughout the school make good progress. Those who do not use English as their first language have few problems when contributing to discussions and those with special educational needs are also fully included. Assemblies often reinforce the work in the classroom and, when almost every hand in the school is raised to answer the question, ‘*Who is the great teacher and hero for Christians?*’ it is clear that good learning has taken place. The main events of Jesus’ life are thoroughly taught. Year 3 pupils know about His birth and Year 4 pupils are conscious in their lesson of the despair of Jesus’ followers when He died and of their joy when they heard that He was alive again. Work in religious education contributes significantly to the development of literacy skills throughout the school. Written work is completed to the same high standard expected in English lessons and opportunities are offered regularly for discussion with teachers taking full advantage of them to develop speaking skills. In two lessons in Year 3, Hindu pupils confidently and clearly talk about their home shrines. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils discuss a story from the Sikh religion that poses dilemmas about how to deal with the violent actions of others. ‘*Should we walk away?*’ One boy links the story to that of the Good Samaritan and the lesson offers a very good opportunity for pupils’ spiritual and moral development because they are given time to reflect and ask questions about the principles by which we should lead our lives.

136. Teaching overall is good and represents an improvement since the last inspection. Two of the six lessons were very good because of the high quality of the relationships. Pupils confidently talked about their ‘*special places*’ with no hint of self-consciousness knowing that their contribution would be respected and valued by teachers and classmates. The lessons moved at a brisk pace and contained a variety of activities to sustain interest. All teachers use resources well. In a Year 4 lesson, a bare tree is imaginatively brought in as a symbol of new life with the leaf buds just swelling, reinforcing pupils’ understanding of Jesus’ death and resurrection linked to other Christian symbols for Easter - the Cross and the egg. Two lessons were judged only satisfactory because, in one case, the teacher tended to give too much information instead of involving pupils in discussion and in the other, the pace of the lesson was not brisk enough.

137. The subject manager is a very competent leader. She is establishing useful links with partner schools to provide continuity for pupils in their learning. She is sensitively introducing changes to the school’s programme of work in the light of new national recommendations and intends to evaluate them with colleagues at the end of next term. She has visited each class to observe lessons and has provided feedback on the strengths and weakness in the school. The lack of this monitoring noted in the last report has therefore been addressed. ICT is not currently used to support work and there is no agreed method of assessing pupils’ attainment. The subject manager acknowledges this. Resources however are adequate and, because videos have recently proved effective in supporting lessons, the intention is to

purchase more. Some visits are undertaken but only in connection with Christianity. Pupils in Year 3 have recently visited the local church and the vicar regularly comes into school.