

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **ELSTON HALL PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104351

Headteacher: Mr Michael Spragg

Reporting inspector: Mr Paul Nicholson  
25406

Dates of inspection: 26 – 29 March 2001

Inspection number: 197388

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Community school

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Stafford Road  
Fordhouses  
Wolverhampton

Postcode: WV10 6NN

Telephone number: 01902 558866

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Don Jones

Date of previous inspection: September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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Janet Butler 9428	Lay inspector		How high are standards? (Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development) How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mary Speakman 21581	Team inspector	Art Religious education	How well are pupils taught?
John Griffiths 20097	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and the other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mohindar Galowalia 20832	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Equal opportunities English as an additional language	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Elston Hall Primary School serves the Fordhouses district in the north of Wolverhampton, which includes a mixture of commercial and residential properties. It contains a wide range of social backgrounds and includes local authority, housing association and privately owned homes. The school is in the Wolverhampton Education Action Zone. It is much bigger than other primary schools. Currently, there are 574 pupils on roll (275 boys and 299 girls) aged from 4 to 11 years. Approximately 20 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is broadly in line with the national average. Fifteen per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority groups, which is a higher proportion than in most schools. Four per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is also a high proportion, although none are at an early stage of learning the English language. The school has identified 19 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs, which is a proportion similar to the national average. Three pupils have a statement of special educational need. When children enter the reception year, their attainment varies greatly from child to child and from year group to year group. In the current reception classes, attainment on entry to the school was average. In previous years, attainment has tended to be below average.

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

Elston Hall is an effective school with some very good features. Overall, standards by the age of 11 are average, though standards in writing are low. The quality of teaching is good and the school is soundly led and managed. It gives satisfactory value for money.

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

- There are excellent relationships; every member of the school is valued and treated with respect.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to school, their behaviour is good and they make an excellent contribution to the life of the school.
- The school is a very caring community in which all staff provide very good support for the personal development of all pupils.
- The overall quality of teaching is good.
- The school provides very good levels of support for pupils with special educational needs.

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

- The standards achieved, especially by higher attaining pupils, in writing by the age of 11, and in English, mathematics, science and design and technology by the age of seven.
- The school's curriculum; in order to provide teachers with a clear progression of what skills and knowledge pupils are to learn as they move through the school in subjects such as art, design and technology, geography and physical education.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' progress, so as to help teachers plan future activities.

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

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

The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection in September 1997. Standards in art, geography and information and communication technology have all improved. The school has made very good progress in improving the pupils' cultural development and has improved health and safety procedures. The school has more clearly defined the administrative roles of teachers, but the new management structure has not yet had a major impact on school improvement. Assessment procedures, which were weak at the last inspection, remain an issue for the school to tackle.

## 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	E	C	C	D
Mathematics	E	E	C	D
Science	E	C	D	D

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

End of Key Stage 2 test results in 2000 show that, by the age of 11, overall standards in English and mathematics were average, but in science they were below average. When compared with similar schools, these results are below average. In the current Year 6, which has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, standards in English are below average because of low standards in writing. However, standards in science have improved and are now average. Standards in mathematics have remained average. Over recent years, the results of the school have improved in line with the rising national trend. At the end of Key Stage 1, test results in 2000 show that pupils aged seven achieved standards that were average in writing, but below average in reading and mathematics. Teacher assessments show standards in science were well below average. In the current Year 2, standards are below average in English (reading and writing), mathematics and science.

The main reason for the below average standards seen at both key stages is that the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standards is below the national average. While many pupils achieve satisfactory standards, higher attaining pupils do not achieve sufficiently high standards for their age. Pupils' performance in all other subjects (art, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education) is broadly in line with national expectations. The exception is in design and technology at Key Stage 1, where standards are below average. Throughout the school, standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes towards their school. They show very high levels of enthusiasm and interest.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils show outstanding levels of personal development. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are excellent.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are similar to the national average.

The very positive attitudes and values pupils have are a strength and they make a significant contribution to the life of the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is good; it ranges from satisfactory to very good. Thirteen per cent of the lessons observed were very good, 53 per cent were good and the remaining 34 per cent were satisfactory. Throughout the school, the teaching of literacy and numeracy is good. The teaching is strongest at Key Stage 2, where nearly 80 per cent of lessons are good or better. The good quality teaching results in the majority of pupils making sound progress in their learning. Much of the teachers' efforts goes into developing good behaviour and the very good personal development of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers, however, do not provide sufficient challenge to ensure higher attaining pupils achieve appropriately high standards.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall, the school's curriculum is satisfactory. It contains a broad range of interesting and relevant activities. It provides teachers with clear guidance in the teaching of literacy and numeracy, but there is insufficient guidance in some other subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is very good provision for these pupils, which includes high levels of support and well-targeted individual education plans. Consequently, these pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is satisfactory support for a small number of these pupils. For most, their skills in English are similar to their classmates. They make satisfactory progress in all their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development, particularly in their moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual development is good. This has a very positive impact on the pupils' attitudes and values.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes very good care of its pupils. There are very good procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare.

The school has a good relationship with its parents and the links between home and school are positive.

Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory. However, there is insufficient guidance in some subjects, such as art, design and technology, geography and physical education, to ensure that pupils progressively develop their skills as they move through the school.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development and the very caring environment that staff create are strengths of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Overall, the headteacher, senior staff and subject co-ordinators provide sound leadership and management. They are developing a more effective management structure with a clearer focus on raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very supportive of the school. It successfully fulfils its responsibilities
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is beginning to evaluate its performance. However, it does not monitor teaching sufficiently well to support the sharing of good practice across the school.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its financial resources and very effective use of specific grants. It uses funding from the education action zone particularly effectively to provide a high level of good quality support staff. Governors are beginning to apply the principles of best value to their decision making.

The headteacher's very committed leadership is particularly successful in achieving high standards in pupils' personal development. All members of the hard working staff successfully support him in this aim. The school's aim for all pupils to reach their full potential is less well fulfilled.

The school has an adequate number of teachers and a good number of classroom support staff. The accommodation is adequate for the number of pupils on roll. There are sufficient resources for all subjects, though some older reading books are in need of replacement.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

One hundred and eighty six parents (32 per cent) completed questionnaires and 28 attended a meeting with inspectors.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children enjoy school.</li> <li>• The teaching is good and children make good progress.</li> <li>• Staff are approachable.</li> <li>• There are high expectations and the school helps children become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework given.</li> <li>• The school working more closely with parents.</li> <li>• The quality of information they receive about their children's progress.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside of lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection findings support most of the parents' positive comments, but show that not all pupils make good progress. The level and quality of homework satisfactorily supports pupils' learning. While the school has good links with parents, some could be improved. Overall, the school provides parents with good opportunities to discuss their children's progress, but annual reports do not always give a clear picture of how well children are doing in comparison with national expectations. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

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

1. At the time of the last inspection, pupils aged 7 and 11 attained overall standards in line with national expectations. Attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 1 was above average but, at the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in information technology, art and geography was below average. The school has maintained the overall average standards by the age of 11, with the previously weak subjects improving, but with standards in English in the current Year 6 slightly declining. Standards by the age of seven in the current Year 2 are low in comparison with those previously seen.
2. Attainment on entry to reception varies greatly between individual children and between the groups of children that enter the school each year. For example, the local education authority's assessment of children on entry to the current reception classes indicates that their attainment is average for their age. However, the previous year's assessment shows children's attainment to be below average. Over recent years, children's attainment on entry has been generally below average for their age. The variations between year groups are reflected throughout the school and in the different standards achieved each year in end of key stage tests and assessments, with results fluctuating between below average and average.
3. The school makes good provision, including good teaching, for children in the Foundation Stage. By the end of their reception year, most children in the current year group will have achieved the appropriate early learning goals<sup>1</sup> for young children. As a result of the high priority given within the school, children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They also make good progress in their physical development. Children make satisfactory progress in each of the other areas of learning<sup>2</sup>.
4. Results of end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests in 2000 show that standards at the age of seven were broadly in line with the national average in writing, but below the national average in reading and mathematics. In writing, most pupils achieved Level 2, the expected standard for a typical seven-year-old. This was above the national average. However, a lower proportion of pupils than found nationally achieved the higher grade within this standard (Level 2A) or the higher standard, Level 3. In reading and mathematics, the proportion achieving Level 2 was close to the national average, but again the proportion achieving the higher grade or the higher standard was below the national average. Teacher assessments in science show that the proportion achieving both the expected standard, Level 2, and the higher standard, Level 3, was well below the national average. In comparison with similar schools, these results were average in writing, but below average in reading and mathematics.<sup>3</sup>
5. Evidence from the inspection indicates that standards in the current Year 2 reflect a similar pattern. Standards in all aspects of English (including speaking and listening, reading and writing), mathematics and science are below average. While many pupils achieve satisfactory levels of attainment in these core subjects, too few achieve the

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<sup>1</sup> Early learning goals – these are the expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage, [which begins when children reach the age of three and ends at the end of the reception class](#). They refer mainly to the achievements children make in the six areas of learning.

<sup>2</sup> Areas of learning – these mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development.

<sup>3</sup> National Benchmark information bands together 'similar schools' based on the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.

higher standards required for their performance to compare favourably with those found nationally and in similar schools. In almost all other subjects, pupils attain standards in line with national expectations. Their achievements in art and design, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education are appropriate for their age. Standards in design and technology are below average because pupils do not sufficiently develop their making skills.

6. End of Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests in 2000 show that standards by the age of 11 were broadly in line with the national average in English and mathematics, but below average in science. In English and science, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard, Level 4, was close to the national average, but the proportion achieving the higher standard, Level 5, was below the average. In mathematics, the reverse was true. Fewer pupils achieved Level 4 while the proportion achieving Level 5 was close to the national average. In comparison with similar schools, these results are below average. Over recent years, the school's performance in Key Stage 2 tests has been improving in line with the improving national trend. Test results show that there is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys.
7. Inspection evidence indicates a broadly similar picture. In the current Year 6, standards in English are below average. While standards in reading and speaking and listening are average, standards in writing are below average because of the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. Standards in mathematics and science are average. The improvement in science is a result of the introduction of setting in the subject at Year 6. Teachers now provide support that more closely meets the needs of pupils.
8. In all other subjects: art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education; pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 achieve standards in line with national expectations.
9. Throughout the school, pupils' achievements in religious education are in line with the expectations of Wolverhampton's Agreed Syllabus for the subject. Pupils have appropriate knowledge for their age of Christianity and other world religions. They use this knowledge to satisfactorily develop their understanding of other people's beliefs and their own values and attitudes.
10. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets because of the high level of support they receive. Teachers make very good use of classroom assistants, who have a very positive impact on these pupils' learning. Setting arrangements throughout the school, and small withdrawal groups in Years 1 to 4, ensure that these pupils have full access to the National Curriculum. This enhances their learning.
11. Though the school has a high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, none are at an early stage of learning English. Observations in lessons show that these pupils have a similar competency in English as their classmates. They make satisfactory progress in language development and in all other subjects. A part-time teacher provides a small amount of support to pupils in a lower ability group. This ensures they, too, maintain their satisfactory progress.
12. The use of reading and writing skills in subjects other than English does not consistently support the development of pupils' literacy skills. In history, older pupils learn to write with empathy, for example when writing about the life of a Roman soldier. However, in other subjects, such as religious education and science, pupils do not use the different styles of writing they have learnt in literacy to develop the literacy skills or

knowledge of the subject. Similarly, pupils make satisfactory use of their numeracy skills in some lessons, for example in information and communication technology, but they do not consistently develop them in subjects such as science and design and technology.

13. Over recent years, the school's results, at the end of both key stages, have fluctuated between average and below average. The pupils' performance at the age of 11 in national tests from 1998 to 2000 show that they are about a term behind in their learning. The school provides very good support for pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils. This ensures they reach satisfactory and in some cases good levels of personal achievement. However, the school has not been as successful in ensuring its higher attaining pupils achieve appropriately high standards. In the past, the targets the school has set for pupils have been too low and teachers have not consistently provided enough challenge for these pupils. The school is aware of this situation and has the raising of standards as a key priority in its school improvement plan.

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

14. The school's most notable strength lies in the very high standards it achieves in this aspect of the pupils' education. Teaching and non-teaching staff encourage a real enthusiasm for learning, and the ability to be self-controlled and socially aware. This promotes a life-long value for educational opportunities, which will stand pupils in good stead, both in their secondary schools and in adult life.
15. Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They are keen to attend, show great interest in lessons and try to do their very best for their teachers. The youngest children in reception concentrate well and persevere with quite difficult tasks, like using scissors, until they reach a satisfactory result. Older children work well in small groups, sharing and refining their ideas until they decide on the best outcome. For example, a group of pupils in Year 6 co-operated very sensibly when making a life-like set of jointed arms and legs for a puppet. In literacy and numeracy lessons, pupils listen well and apply what they have learnt to the subsequent group-work, often without further support. They are eager to answer questions, work hard and are proud of their achievements. Pupils clearly enjoy their work and often seem sorry when the lesson ends, as observed when one class wanted to continue their artwork through a wet playtime.
16. Behaviour is good, both in lessons and during break-times. Pupils respond obediently to teachers' requests, which means that no time is lost during lessons or during the changeover of literacy and numeracy sets. In a few classes in Key Stage 1, teachers' skills in managing pupils are less effective, but although pupils may become rather noisy their behaviour is never less than satisfactory. Movements around the school building are orderly and calm. Pupils treat property and resources with care. In the playground, pupils play well with one another, making sure that their activities do not interfere with other games. The pupils in Key Stage 2 are coping well with the limitations placed on their play area by the current building work. Pupils are involved in drawing up their own classroom rules and respect the need for sanctions should behaviour be unacceptable. The school has used short, fixed-term exclusions in the past for the very rare occasions when it has been necessary to emphasise its total rejection of aggressive behaviour.
17. The school ethos is characterised by excellent relationships, where every member of the school community is valued and treated with respect. Pupils and adults show a high level of care and concern for each other. In lessons, pupils encourage one another and share in each other's successes. There was a sense of real camaraderie

in the Year 6 class who worked hard together to prepare their class assembly about life in the Caribbean. Older pupils acknowledge the high quality of relationships in the school and are proud of the absence of any tension due to gender or social background. Pupils respect the different views, values and beliefs of others. There is very good racial harmony and a happy mix of ethnic groups both at work and at play. After leaving Elston Hall, several high school pupils maintain links with their old school and clearly value the relationships forged there.

18. Pupils' personal development is excellent. As they grow older, they demonstrate confidence, high self-esteem and maturity beyond their years. Even the youngest children are happy to take on responsibility. They make independent choices and are willing to assist in clearing away after lessons. Throughout the school, pupils undertake duties with diligence and reliability, such as register monitor, teacher's help and librarian. In Year 6, they make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school by assisting with lunchtime chores, listening to younger readers and helping with the Key Stage 1 computer club. Their excellent sense of social responsibility has been given a powerful tool by the formation this year of a school council. Representatives from all Key Stage 2 classes liaise with Key Stage 1 to ensure that all pupils in the school now have an opportunity to voice their views about the quality and organisation of school life. During the inspection, two pupils in Year 6 very ably chaired and minuted a weekly session of the school council, with a variety of sensible, well-voiced suggestions and opinions from other council members. As an exercise in self-government, the meeting was exemplary. Pupils also show initiative in lessons, take an active role in charitable events, and respond very well to the many opportunities teachers give them to grow into responsible young citizens.
19. Attendance is satisfactory and close to the national average for primary schools. It has increased significantly since the last inspection. Most pupils have very good attendance records and many achieve the termly certificates for full attendance. Parents inform the school of all reasons for absence and, although the school takes a very firm stand on what constitutes an acceptable reason, unauthorised absence remains very low.

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

20. Taking account of the quality of teaching observed during the week of the inspection, the findings of the scrutiny of pupils' work and of teachers' planning, the quality of teaching is good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and a higher percentage of teaching is now good or very good. However, there is still a need for teachers to use assessment in many subjects to inform their further planning, as was the case at the time of the last inspection.
21. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good. Overall, 53 per cent of teaching is good and 13 per cent very good. In the Foundation Stage, 56 per cent of teaching is good and 44 per cent satisfactory. Twenty-eight per cent of teaching at Key Stage 1 is good and 11 per cent very good. The strongest teaching is at Key Stage 2, where 63 per cent of teaching is good and 16 per cent very good.
22. Teaching for children who are in reception is good. The teachers and support staff have a good understanding of the needs of the children. They manage the children very well and work in close and effective partnership to provide for their personal and learning needs. They provide a reasonable range of interesting and purposeful activities, which enable children to make good strides in their learning, especially in personal, social and emotional development.

23. Teachers' subject knowledge is good overall, although it is stronger in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 2 than it is at Key Stage 1. Where teachers have a high level of subject expertise, this enables them to extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively. This is particularly the case in English, mathematics, and information and communication technology at Key Stage 2, where pupils are making good progress.
24. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good overall. Teachers have good understanding of both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. This, combined with the positive relationships they have with pupils and the careful planning of lessons in these important subjects, results in effective teaching for most pupils. Teachers plan lessons in sufficient outline for the half term and then produce more detailed weekly plans. They plan a variety of tasks for pupils that in most cases link suitably to pupils' earlier levels of understanding. For example, in a very good mathematics lesson seen in Year 6, pupils were learning about factors and prime numbers. The teacher ensured that all pupils were set work that was at an appropriate level of difficulty and challenge, with the higher attaining pupils being required to deal with more complex numbers. However, sometimes the tasks planned for the higher attaining pupils lack challenge and, when this is the case, these pupils' learning is not extended as far as it might be.
25. In a satisfactory lesson for younger pupils in Key Stage 2, the teacher set higher attaining pupils additional work. However, it was at the same level as the work they had completed earlier and, although it served to consolidate their understanding, it did not extend their thinking further. Teachers make sure that they use subject specific language and technical terms correctly in all subjects. For example, in a Year 3 history lesson about Roman baths the teacher introduced pupils to 'frigidarium'. However, teachers give pupils fewer opportunities to practise their writing skills in subjects other than English. Writing tasks sometimes do not make use of skills pupils have learnt in literacy lessons. For example, pupils often write up science experiments as continuous prose, although pupils are learning in their literacy lessons different ways of writing factual information.
26. Teachers' lesson planning is satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers identify objectives for pupils' learning and, in most lessons, they make them clear to the pupils. However, sometimes the objectives are very general and do not state specifically what the teacher wants the pupils to know, do and understand by the end of the lesson. This slows the pace of learning because pupils are unsure about on what aspect of their learning they should concentrate. This was particularly noted in science, physical education and geography. For example, in a satisfactory physical education lesson the objective was very general about the type of movements the teacher wanted the pupils to improve. Although the pupils enjoyed the lesson and followed instructions carefully, because the intentions of the lesson were not specific enough, not all the pupils were clear about which movements to try and improve. Therefore, the quality of their movement did not improve as much as it could have done. Conversely, in a more successful physical education lesson, the teacher's planning focused very specifically on incorporating several different types of jump into a sequence of movement. The clear planning was followed up with very clear instructions to the pupils so they all knew exactly what elements of movement they were trying to improve, with the result that pupils made good progress in their learning. The pupils worked hard and made sure they landed safely with a good sense of the shapes they were making.
27. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are satisfactory throughout the school. However, teachers could expect more of higher attaining pupils. Where expectations are higher, teachers conduct whole-class teaching at a brisk pace, involving pupils in

the discussion and explanations, and they use questioning well to check pupils' understanding and extend it further. In less demanding lessons, particularly at Key Stage 2, sometimes teachers do not maintain the initial pace when pupils embark on their work. When the pace of the lesson slows, the noise level is unacceptably high and pupils are distracted from their work by the noise and the conversation of their classmates.

28. Teachers use a wide range of teaching methods to engage the pupils' interest. Most lesson introductions are lively and interesting and make good use of questioning to assess what the pupils remember or know from the previous session. Pupils work in a variety of groups. Throughout the school, pupils in English and mathematics, and in science at Year 6, are taught in sets based on prior attainment. Within these sets, the work for pupils is organised according to their prior understanding, but this is not always the case in other subjects. Sometimes, teachers match tasks accurately to pupils' learning needs and enable them to make good progress, at other times there is a lack of challenge in the activities provided for the higher attaining pupils. Teachers vary the organisation of pupils well, depending on the type of activity and what they want the pupils to learn. For example, in art in Year 6 pupils worked in small groups and pairs, designing and making decorative hats from a variety of materials. This grouping of pupils was effective because they benefited from sharing their ideas and from managing the materials they were using together.
29. Overall, teachers manage pupils very well. Teachers establish very positive and productive relationships with their pupils. They maintain assured control of their classes in a friendly but purposeful manner. Class rules are displayed in all rooms and teachers are consistent in their insistence on high standards of behaviour. Children in reception also understand the standards of behaviour that teachers expect of them. Pupils in Key Stage 2 work well without direct intervention and support each other well when difficulties arise. In design and technology, before pupils in Year 5 work together in pairs, the 'golden rules' of working together are emphasised, with particular reference to pupils being prepared to compromise. On those few occasions when class management is not as successful, it is usually because the pace of the lesson is not as brisk as it could be or pupils are unsure about what is required of them.
30. The use of assessment in lessons is better for children in the Foundation Stage than at Key Stages 1 and 2. Throughout the school, teachers support pupils well in lessons, and intervene appropriately if they are having difficulties. Teachers give pupils useful feedback during the lessons about how well they are progressing. The marking of pupils' work is very variable. Sometimes, teachers identify what pupils need to do to improve and make this clear to the pupils. However, although marking usually acknowledges the accuracy of the work, teachers do not always identify how pupils can improve.
31. Teachers make good use of the available teaching time. Lessons start briskly after registration and pupils accomplish the changeover of ability sets quickly and efficiently. Teachers make effective use of resources to motivate pupils and add clarity to their teaching. Resources are accessible to pupils and usually available for the start of the lessons. Very good use of whiteboards and number cards is made in mathematics for pupils to show their working and solutions quickly. Pupils enjoy using this equipment and it is an opportunity for teachers to assess very quickly what the pupils have understood. Good use is made of resources in religious education. Pupils handle religious artefacts from many faiths with care and their understanding of belief benefits from this. The provision of homework is satisfactory and teachers set pupils a reasonable range of activities, which link appropriately to pupils' current learning.

32. When teachers have additional support they manage this very well. Teachers thoroughly brief support staff so they are clear about the role they are to play. Good use of support staff to monitor and assess pupils' response to whole-class teaching was seen in all key stages. There is some support for pupils for whom English is an additional language. This is well targeted and enables them to make similar rates of progress to their classmates. Pupils with special educational needs benefit considerably from the additional support they are given, which enables them to participate fully in lessons and make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.
33. The quality of pupils' learning is closely linked with the quality of teaching. Pupils learn at a good rate overall, although the rate of learning is often better at the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 than at Key Stage 1. Pupils respond well to the additional demands that staff put on them at Key Stage 2 and achieve a great deal in the time they have. Throughout the school, pupils demonstrate a good level of independence in their attitudes to learning. They use resources, computers and books independently to search for additional information, and work confidently and sensibly without direct supervision. Because teachers generally make good use of the final stages of a lesson to review with the pupils what they have learnt, most pupils have a good understanding of what they are learning and what they need to do next. The high quality of much of the teaching is instrumental in promoting pupils' positive attitudes towards their work and the good levels of energy and effort that pupils put into their work.

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

34. The school plans a satisfactory curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. It covers the required areas of learning and includes a broad range of interesting activities, stimulating and relevant to children's needs before they commence National Curriculum work at the start of Year 1.
35. The curriculum for pupils from the ages of 6 to 11 years is satisfactory. It includes a full range of subjects that have appropriate breadth and balance. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. This shows that, since the last inspection, the school has maintained a satisfactory curriculum for children and pupils. The successful introduction of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy has improved the effectiveness of teachers' planning in these subjects. However, some subjects in the curriculum, for example design and technology, geography, art and design and physical education, are in need of further review because the current emphasis is too closely linked to the factual content of the subject. These subjects do not have clearly defined guidance for progressively developing skills and knowledge through the school.
36. The whole school community ensures that all pupils are included in all aspects of school life and have equality of access to the full curriculum. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is very good throughout the school. Their individual education plans are detailed and they identify specific targets. Teachers closely match these to the pupils' needs. The arrangements for these pupils' assessment and the monitoring of their progress are very good. Each class teacher maintains an up to date register, which charts pupils' progress. Setting arrangements for literacy and numeracy together with small withdrawal groups provide these pupils with appropriate tasks. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational need is excellent. For example, the school provides a pupil in Year 6 with dedicated computer equipment and full time support to assist her learning. Samples of the work from pupils with statements of special educational need show careful progression in specific tasks.

37. Personal, social and health education throughout the school is developing as teachers have only recently written a coherent whole-school programme. The effective programme is now being implemented and lessons are taking place at designated times in the timetable. The areas and topics to be included in the programme are relevant to the needs of the pupils in the school. Pupils are encouraged to explore their feelings and to consider the feelings of others. Healthy eating topics and designing an adventure playground create opportunities to link with other subjects in the curriculum, such as science and design and technology. Other activities in the programme at harvest time show good community links involving the elderly and a hospice. The school has a good environmental studies scheme developed by a co-ordinator. She gives good guidance on including environmental topics within subject programmes such as science and geography as well as personal, social and health education.
38. The school has recently developed a whole-school approach to curriculum planning and monitoring. The deputy headteacher, who has a good overview of the curriculum and a clear vision for its development, is developing the role of the subject co-ordinators. Co-ordinators are currently monitoring their subject by looking at the planning throughout the school. Later in the year, teachers plan to review this analysis of planning in order to ascertain that what is taught matches the needs of the pupils as well as the National Curriculum. Subject co-ordinator roles will be further developed this year to enable them to monitor teaching in their subjects. At present, monitoring and assessment systems to ensure the progressive development of skills within most subjects are insufficient. Teachers use an analysis of test results to place pupils into year sets, which allows pupils to be taught to their level of ability; for example in English, mathematics and the older pupils for science. However, at present systems to assess pupils' progress in subjects are insufficient to help teachers plan challenging activities that extend the learning of pupils, particularly the higher attaining pupils.
39. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities. The opportunity for pupils to participate in a wide range of sporting activities is actively promoted and teams have considerable competitive success. For example, the girls' football team won a 4-a-side football competition this year and the boys' football team were league winners last year. Two girls and one boy represent the town for football. Pupils also achieve considerable success in rounders, softball, and cross-country. Apart from sporting activities, the school also runs a good range of clubs that are well attended. These include drama for infants, German language, orchestra, environmental studies and science clubs. Pupils make visits to museums and other places of interest, including a farm and nearby Moseley Old Hall. Year 6 pupils are involved in a good initiative to help the transition from Year 6 to the next stage of their education. In this project, they develop their personal and social skills and visit several venues, such as the nearby Molineux Centre and the National Gallery in London.
40. The local community makes a good contribution to learning. The Friends of Elston Hall have a good, long-standing link with the school and are instrumental in raising money for projects. The school's membership of the Wolverhampton Education Action Zone provides good links with local companies and agencies. A visitor to the school enables pupils to gain a greater insight into the lives of animals. Parents are involved with school activities and many of the classroom support assistants are parents and local community members. A local parson, who is also a member of the governing body, is a regular visitor who gives good support to pupils and staff as well as leading assemblies.
41. The school has good relations with partner institutions, including the nearby nursery school. Subject co-ordinators are involved with co-ordinators from other schools to voice needs and share expertise. The science co-ordinator is the chair of the local committee for the Association for Science Education. The school provides good

facilities and support for students training to be teachers and the links with the local university that provide them are good.

42. The school makes good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education through a recently introduced programme. It ensures that there is a comprehensive range of topics taught, which complement those already in place through attention to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Dedicated time for teaching aspects of decision making, sex education, drugs awareness and citizenship is supplemented by regular 'circle times', which provide good opportunities for pupils to discuss issues that confront them in everyday life. Excellent relationships and the security of knowing that everyone's contribution is valued make these sessions particularly valuable. Class teachers are very sensitive to the needs of their own groups and may adjust the lesson plan accordingly, as in the Year 3 class who looked at a child's response to the breakdown of a family unit.
43. Since the last inspection, the school has given a higher priority to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is now very good overall and has addressed a key issue from the last inspection. Particular enrichment of pupils' cultural awareness has meant that they understand the significance of cultural traditions in elements of art, music and English. They also have first hand experience of some of the multi-ethnic cultures in British society today. Caribbean influences in counting rhymes and the traditional Anancy stories were a popular theme during the inspection, particularly when mixed with music and drama by a visiting theatre group. The dance programme in physical education uses music from other times and cultures, including Celtic folk tunes, whilst Aboriginal artwork and a focus on African masks have inspired creativity in the recent past. Local culture is not forgotten, with Black Country stick dances and investigations of the industrial past of their area.
44. Teachers foster good spiritual development by giving pupils an awareness of the mysteries in creation and opportunities to reflect on the meaning and purpose of life. In this regard, staff thoughtfully lead some assemblies, giving pupils plenty to think about and the time and stillness to grasp these difficult concepts. However, sometimes in collective worship, opportunities for reflection are lost and there is little attention paid to music appreciation. Teachers give pupils good opportunities in religious education lessons to develop their thoughts and to show real empathy and sensitivity towards one another in circle times.
45. The school is very successful in creating an ethos in which its stated values are clear for all to see. Through their very good planning for moral and social development, all staff help pupils to demonstrate truth, respect, consideration, self-discipline and responsibility. The formation of a school council has given a very high status to the maintenance and development of these values.

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

46. Since the last inspection the school has tightened its health and safety procedures and improved the level of first aid provision. Its procedures for ensuring the protection and welfare of children are now very good and carried out with vigilance and care. The school makes and records the results of regular safety checks and has successfully addressed all the issues from the last inspection. It has recently reviewed child protection procedures, which are well known to all staff and follow the local area guidelines. The care shown to all pupils, and particularly those with very special educational needs, is very good.

47. One of the strengths of the school is the excellent way in which it monitors and supports pupils' personal development. The appointment of an attendance officer, as part of the education action zone initiative, has increased the school's capacity to monitor attendance and punctuality by ensuring that parents are contacted on the first day of absence in most circumstances. This, together with several incentive schemes for promoting good attendance, is having a positive effect on pupils' attendance and is very good provision. Educational inclusion is the main aim of the school's pastoral policies, and considerable efforts are made to support and encourage in the extremely rare instance of a pupil who finds it very difficult to attend.
48. Pupils are very clear about the school's expectations of good behaviour. Class teachers and support staff provide consistent quiet reinforcement of the school's behaviour code by emphasising and praising good behaviour and positive role models. The newly adopted behaviour policy has moved the focus away from a set list of consequences for bad behaviour, but the pupils are aware that inappropriate behaviour might result in a report slip and missed playtime. The guidance provided by staff is very effective in creating an atmosphere where pupils behave well and are keen to earn class merits, or the honour of a place in the weekly praise assembly. This has a very positive impact on the pupils' productivity in lessons. The school has very good procedures for identifying and eliminating any forms of aggressive or bullying behaviour.
49. There have been some improvements in the arrangements for assessing pupils' learning since the last inspection, but not enough to give teachers a clear picture of how pupils are progressing in each subject. Although suitable systems are in place for evaluating standards in literacy and numeracy, they are unsatisfactory for the rest of the curriculum. Each of the other subjects has outline assessment procedures in place, but these are at a very early stage of development. There is no consistent approach to assessment throughout the school. This is partly because teachers' planning of what is to be learned is not sufficiently detailed. Consequently, they are unable to focus on exactly what and how well pupils have achieved. Without a clear knowledge of pupils' standards teachers cannot plan appropriately for the next stage of learning. Staff make satisfactory use of what they know, but this is not enough to raise standards and help pupils to reach the higher grades.
50. The earliest assessment procedures start during the children's first two weeks in school. Teachers analyse the results to find out about their language, mathematical and social skills. This information is used well to plan suitable learning activities within three groups according to the children's level of development and the early learning goals. However, the brief planning does not clearly identify the skills and knowledge to be developed. This makes it difficult to assess how successfully children are learning. There is a very good system for identifying pupils who have special educational needs. Regular reviews of progress towards individual targets comply with the nationally recognised Code of Practice<sup>4</sup> in the assessment of pupils' needs.
51. Senior members of staff analyse the results of national tests at the end of both key stages and of optional tests each year in Key Stage 2. They use this information about pupils' progress to set future learning targets. These need to be set higher than in past years if the school is to raise standards further. The school has begun to extend its comparisons of the achievements of different groups of pupils. This now includes those from different ethnic groups, so that teachers may plan more effectively for their needs.

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<sup>4</sup> [Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.](#)

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

52. The school values its good relationship with parents and encourages support by providing plenty of information about the work of the school and the progress of pupils. Parents think that this is a good school and, since the last inspection, more of them are taking an interest in how the school is doing. The quality of links between homes and school is good, and is helped by the willingness of staff or parents to share their concerns about pupils' progress on both an informal basis and through parents' evenings. There are, however, some areas in which this partnership could be even more effective.
53. Although information provided by the school is generally of good quality, and helps the parents in their efforts to support learning at home, the pupils' annual progress reports are still not sufficiently diagnostic. They are detailed in describing what pupils have covered and what their personal achievements are in most subjects. However, they do not give parents a clear idea of how well their child is doing in comparison with national levels of attainment, nor are they clear about what children need to do for them to improve. There are termly meetings when parents, pupils and class teachers discuss and review targets, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Parents would benefit from a written copy of what is agreed, so that they could help in supporting learning and monitoring their child's progress.
54. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning both at school and at home, and there are some strengths which could be built on. Voluntary helpers are invited and co-ordinated by a member of staff, such that several classes benefit from additional adult support. In some respects, this system is a little formal and may dissuade some parents from giving assistance where it might be worthwhile. The current family learning project may well be a springboard to more informed parental assistance both at school and at home. Overall, the majority of parents support their children by hearing reading at home and supporting homework tasks, but there is little evidence of meaningful comments in diaries or reading records to extend the pupils' work.
55. The impact of parents on the work of the school is good, as they are staunch supporters of school policies and take an active interest both in learning activities and in social and fund-raising events. The Friends of Elston Hall is a very active support group that organises a range of special events, fairs and the like, the profits from which are used to improve the learning environment for the pupils. The attractive and challenging play equipment in the Key Stage 1 quadrangle and the plans for similar in Key Stage 2 are good examples of how parental support has galvanised whole-school participation towards its goal.

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

56. At the time of the last inspection, the school was soundly led and managed. There were weaknesses relating to the roles of the senior management team and the subject co-ordinators. The school has maintained its overall sound leadership. The school has clarified the roles of teachers with responsibility and the strengthened management structure is now beginning to have a more positive impact on school improvement. However, the requirements for better monitoring of teaching and learning, including assessment, are not sufficiently well met.
57. The school has a clear and appropriate mission statement based on offering each pupil a stimulating and demanding education, treating all pupils as individuals and

encouraging them to care about themselves, their work and for each other. Governors and staff have a shared commitment to providing a caring community in which pupils can reach their potential. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school based on raising pupils' self-esteem. Through his very committed leadership, a very positive, caring ethos permeates all aspects of school life. Adults establish trust through care and commitment, which successfully promotes excellent relationships and supports equal opportunities for all pupils. The headteacher shows great commitment to the personal and social development of the pupils. The school's aim for all pupils to reach their full potential is less well fulfilled.

58. At the time of the last inspection, the roles of the senior management team and the subject co-ordinators were not fully developed. They did not monitor the impact of planning and teaching on pupils' attainment and progress. Since then, their roles have become clearer as the school has introduced more appropriate job descriptions. The newly appointed deputy headteacher has quickly identified the strengths and weaknesses in the school's curriculum and is having a positive impact on school improvement through supporting the subject co-ordinators. The senior management team has improved communication between the staff and is now involved in monitoring pupils' work and teachers' planning. So far, they have not monitored teaching, though this is planned. The subject co-ordinators have received relevant training. They are now beginning to take a more effective role in managing their subjects. This is an improvement to the situation found at the last inspection and they now make a satisfactory contribution to school improvement.
59. The governing body is very supportive of the school. It successfully fulfils its statutory responsibilities by ensuring all legally required documents and policies are in place, including a school prospectus and a special educational needs policy. There are, however, a few minor omissions in the governors' annual report to parents. These include the rates of authorised and unauthorised absence, information about security and information about the school's special educational needs policy. The chair of governors ably carries out his various functions, including liaison with the headteacher. He puts much effort into raising the profile of the school within the local community. The governing body meets regularly and has an appropriate structure that includes committees for finance, general purposes and curriculum. Governors carefully monitor spending. They have put a high priority on improving the quality of the accommodation. Governors see questioning policy and practice as an important part of their role. They have developed effective links with the subject co-ordinators, which provides them with an insight into the work of the school. However, they have yet to develop an effective system to fully develop their understanding of classroom practice.
60. The headteacher, together with the relevant subject co-ordinators, have satisfactorily monitored the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Currently, the headteacher does not monitor teaching sufficiently well to allow the sharing of good practice across the school and ensure a continued improvement in teaching and pupils' learning. The planned use of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators will go some way to improving this situation. The school has satisfactorily introduced performance management, including the setting of targets for the headteacher. The school improvement plan correctly identifies appropriate whole-school priorities, including the raising of standards. However, the action plans are not specific enough to show how the staff are to achieve these targets.
61. The overall leadership of special educational needs is very good and the co-ordinator provides an excellent lead to her colleagues. She provides high quality support to her colleagues and manages the systems effectively. All classroom support assistants

have job descriptions and they know their roles clearly. This has a positive impact on the progress that pupils with special educational needs make.

62. There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. There is a good range of experience and subject expertise amongst the teaching staff. Extra funding has been used to ensure a high number of support staff who are well-trained and provide a very effective level of assistance, both in lessons and when pupils with special educational needs receive more individual attention. There are very good systems in place for the mentoring and support of all adults new to the staff, from teachers through to lunchtime supervisors and students on initial teacher training. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are comprehensive and ensure that teachers share newly acquired information.
63. The school makes very effective use of specific grants, including the standards fund and funding for special educational needs. Grants available from the education action zone have had a very positive impact on learning, through the funding of additional classroom support staff, and attendance, through the provision of additional clerical support. The various functions of the school's office are run efficiently. The school makes effective use of new technology, for example to monitor attendance and to store financial data.
64. The well-presented accommodation is adequate for the delivery of the curriculum and has some good features. The governors have thoughtfully upgraded the accommodation to make the best use of an old-style building. Improvements to the level of corridors have provided easy access to classrooms. The environmental studies co-ordinator, with the help of staff and pupils, has been instrumental in creating the very pleasant areas within the two quadrangles of the school. The new adventure play equipment has dramatically enriched the Key Stage 1 quadrangle. The caretaker and his staff maintain the accommodation to a high standard. Internal rearrangements have allowed the installation of a dedicated computer suite. However, the current reference library is small. The completion of building work on three classrooms will ensure that the school can provide a full curriculum for its rising number of pupils.
65. Learning resources across all subject areas are adequate and generally in good condition. The school is aware of the shabby state of some reading books in Key Stage 1 and has plans to replace them. The main strengths of the resources are the hardware and software for teaching information and communication technology, of which the school is justifiably proud.

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

66. To further improve the quality of education provided and to raise standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should now:
  - 1) raise the overall standards for pupils; especially of higher attaining pupils, and in particular at Key Stage 1 in English, mathematics, science and design and technology and at Key Stage 2 in writing;  
(Paragraphs: 4-7, 84-86, 89, 93, 96, 105)

This should be done by:

  - giving more explicit challenge to higher attaining pupils so that they understand what is expected of them;  
(Paragraphs: 24-25, 27, 38, 83, 96, 113, 121,143)

- improving the monitoring of teaching so that the quality of teaching continues to improve through the sharing of the good practice observed in many lessons;  
(Paragraphs: 27, 60, 100, 131)
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing for different purposes in other subjects as well as English;  
(Paragraphs: 12, 25, 72, 95)
  - ensuring lessons, particularly at Key Stage 1, are conducted at a brisk pace;  
(Paragraphs: 27, 142)
  - improving the practical skills used by pupils at Key Stage 1 in design and technology;  
(Paragraphs: 123-124)
- 2) complete the current review of the school's curriculum so that there is a clear progression in the teaching of skills and knowledge as pupils move through the school, particularly in art and design, design and technology, geography and physical education;  
(Paragraphs: 35, 38, 121, 126, 130, 157)
- 3) develop a manageable, whole-school system for assessing pupils' progress in all subjects to help teachers plan challenging activities to extend the learning of all pupils.  
(Paragraphs: 49-50, 114, 121, 131, 158, 163)

In addition to the key issues above, the following minor issues should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan. They are indicated by the following paragraphs:

<b>Area for development</b>	<b>Paragraph/s</b>
Ensuring there is always a distinct focus to the lesson objective; so that it is clear what it is pupils are to learn.	26, 68, 126, 157
Improve the quality of marking; to help pupils identify what it is they need to improve.	30
Improving the targets in the school improvement plan; so that actions focus clearly on the school's priorities and show precisely how targets are to be achieved.	60

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	100
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	13	53	34	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	574
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	119

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	108

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	23

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8
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 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	50	39	89

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	42	46	49
	Girls	33	37	35
	Total	75	83	84
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	84 (88)	93 (87)	94 (91)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	40	45	42
	Girls	33	35	31
	Total	73	80	73
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	82 (88)	90 (90)	82 (87)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	40	35	75

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	32	28	38
	Girls	27	23	28
	Total	59	51	66
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	79 (67)	68 (56)	88 (75)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	23	28	25
	Girls	20	19	22
	Total	43	47	47
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	57 (56)	63 (57)	63 (65)
	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	30
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	14
Indian	21
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	421
Any other minority ethnic group	6

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

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	3	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	24.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.1
Average class size	27.3

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

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	315

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	870,043
Total expenditure	872,719
Expenditure per pupil	1,505
Balance brought forward from previous year	34,923
Balance carried forward to next year	32,247

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate: 20 per cent

Number of questionnaires sent out	574
Number of questionnaires returned	186

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	40	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	39	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	48	9	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	48	13	2	0
The teaching is good.	54	42	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	38	9	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	35	3	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	35	3	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	37	46	11	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	49	41	5	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	42	6	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	40	10	1	4

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

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

67. The school makes good provision for the children in the Foundation Stage, particularly in the efficient organisation and management of the three reception classes. Most of the children attend the adjacent nursery before starting school. Children enter school with widely differing standards of development from year to year. In recent years, attainment has been below average. In this year's intake, most children have levels of ability which are expected of this age group. This is shown in the initial assessments made when they entered the reception class. Good teaching and a high number of support staff have a positive effect on the children's learning. Most of the children will attain the standards expected for each area of learning by the time they start Year 1, as reported at the time of the previous inspection. Staff make very good provision for children with special educational needs and these children make good progress.
68. Staff organise the three classes into a single teaching unit. Children are taught in one of three groups for literacy and for numeracy each morning. This is to help them learn at the level appropriate for their stage of development. In the afternoons they choose from a variety of suitable activities, when they experiment with different tools and materials. These learning situations are carefully prepared, but teaching plans do not identify in sufficient detail the particular skills to be developed. This makes it more difficult for staff to assess exactly what children have learned in order to plan for the next stage.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

69. By the time they leave the reception class the children have developed very good skills in this area. Many exceed the early learning goals, which shows a good level of achievement. The children behave very well whether listening to staff or working and playing together. Staff make their expectations very clear about how they want children to behave. The few simple class rules about listening, being kind and behaving sensibly show the qualities of behaviour encouraged by staff. Children are friendly and very polite when they speak to each other and to adults. This reflects the courtesy and respect seen between members of staff and towards children. Children take turns and share harmoniously when playing a game or using materials. They look after equipment well and know how to put things away carefully after using them. They confidently choose their own activities in the freer afternoon session, and are able to find and use resources independently. They proudly display the merit stickers they have earned for trying hard with their work.

**Communication, language and literacy**

70. The average and above average children are expected to reach the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Teachers provide good opportunities in a variety of settings for children to listen to adults and to each other. Children learn to listen quietly with other classes in assembly. In their smaller class groups, they enjoy responding with their own suggestions or ideas to stories such as *Jasper's Beanstalk* and *The Selfish Giant*.
71. Reception class teachers follow the literacy framework used by the rest of the school, grouping the children according to their stages of learning development. Within this arrangement, children practise letter sounds and learn to write their shapes correctly with pencil, paint or in sand. The effectiveness of phonics teaching is evident in the children's good efforts at writing simple sentences. In writing 'The little boy was crying because he couldn't get up the tree' one child accurately spelt most of the words.

Many children spell simple words correctly and make good recognisable attempts at more difficult spellings. This helps their shared reading of 'Big Books' such as *Pass the jam, Jim*. The average attaining group identified the initial 'j' and final 's' sounds in the story. They were interested to discover them again in 'jigsaw', 'jumper', 'snakes' and 'sandcastles' in follow-up activities. Suitably short tasks help the below average group to listen and most link sounds to letters. All the children work hard at learning their individual collections of words to help their understanding of sets of graded individual reading books. They explain that, during 'choosing time', they may look at the more interesting and colourful picture storybooks.

72. Teachers find that implementing the literacy hour at this early stage is successful in matching teaching to ability level. It may give more purpose to reading and writing however, if they were linked more closely with other areas of learning.

### **Mathematical development**

73. By the time they are five, most children make good progress in attaining the early learning goals for this area. They take part enthusiastically in well-prepared numeracy activities and games, responding appropriately to questions such as 'How many more?' and 'How many altogether?' They can count to at least to 10 and most to 20 or more. As with literacy, the children learn in different groups appropriate to their level of understanding. Higher attaining pupils count forwards and backwards from 20 to zero. They count in 10s to 100 and begin to add together two numbers or amounts of money. Through a good variety of activities they learn to make comparisons between size, weight, shapes and money. Teachers plan useful and enjoyable ways of learning. One group enjoyed using a 'washing line', which helped them to arrange a set of giant coins in order of value. The lower attaining pupils are still learning how to match a number to the correct quantity of objects. They develop their understanding through suitable sorting, matching and sequencing games.
74. Combining numeracy with other learning activities would help children to apply their number skills in real contexts. It may also enable teachers to give more support to individuals than when all are involved in the same area of learning.

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

75. Teachers provide an interesting range of practical experiences for children to develop an understanding about the world around them. By the end of the reception year they achieve the level of understanding expected of children of this age. They have made very good progress in their use of computers. The children concentrate particularly well when using the computers and programmable toys in the reception computer suite. Working independently, they listen to instructions on their headphones as they confidently use the mouse control to move items around the screen. By using a remote control they learn how to guide toy vehicles in different directions.
76. Teachers carefully choose stories and information about celebrations, such as Christmas and Divali, to help the children discover more about their own and other people's customs. They learn how to dress in a sari outfit and talk about food for Chinese New Year menus.
77. Looking at new life in spring enables children to observe changes in their environment, although some related activities are rather formally organised. The children producing identical puppets that would grow 'cress hair' could design their own way of growing the seeds. A parent's visit with a pet rabbit provided a good starting point for children to find out about animals' needs. This led to the development of a 'vet's surgery' for them to practise caring for toy animals.

### **Physical development**

78. The children's confident, well co-ordinated movements show that most will achieve the early learning goals, and many will exceed them in this area. This is because they have plenty of carefully organised opportunities to move around safely in a large space, both in the hall and outside. Teachers encourage children to find different ways of moving over the equipment. Children's good awareness of space was seen in their *Bear Hunt* movements over, through and around hoops, ropes and mats in the hall. All of the children can run, roll, balance and know how to land when they jump off the adventure playground apparatus. Teachers' good use of children's demonstrations helps them to learn from each other and improve their skills. Children enjoy inventing their own games, using the large wheeled toys and construction kits in their own secure outside play area.
79. The adults help to develop children's fine movement skills by providing a variety of drawing and model making activities. They learn to use scissors safely when folding and cutting out paper shapes and joining them together. Teachers need to specify more clearly which skills are to be developed so that tasks can be gradually made more demanding.

### **Creative development**

80. Children make satisfactory progress in meeting the early learning goals for this area. Teachers set up good opportunities for them to use their imagination to invent their own play in the suitably equipped fruit shop, vet's surgery and house play areas. Children involve adults in their 'vet's' play by asking for their dog's name and using the instruments to give an injection. They enjoy using the pens and notepads provided to 'write' a prescription, using appropriate language, such as 'He will get better. It will take about 12 months'. One child, playing the role of one of the 'special visitors', talked through in detail his page of 'writing' about the children's work. He used an appropriate 'inspector's voice and manner' to convey his satisfaction with all that he saw. Another child walked through the classrooms carrying a cassette recorder and speaking through a microphone.
81. Children choose from a suitable range of tools and materials to make colourful and attractive pictures to express their ideas. They enjoy using bright sparkly textures to decorate their symmetrical cut-out butterfly shapes. Children develop musical skills from a detailed music curriculum, taught by the Key Stage 1 co-ordinator. At present they are learning about high and low sounds in singing and listening to instruments.

### **Teaching**

82. Just over half of the teaching in lessons was judged to be good and the rest satisfactory. There are very good relationships between teachers, nursery nurses and classroom assistants. They all work together very well in their consistently high expectations of behaviour from the children. This is strengthened by the helpful written guidance for each activity led by the class assistants. Management of the literacy and numeracy groups, and of the miscellany of activities in the three classrooms and two outside areas, is very well organised. These features of good management and relationships, together with the generous level of staffing, make a positive contribution to the quality of teaching overall. As a result, children are well motivated and make satisfactory achievement in their learning.
83. In the higher literacy and numeracy groups, teachers need to ensure that the more able children undertake sufficiently demanding tasks. This is needed to increase their rate of learning and to enable them to benefit from this form of grouping. To raise standards further in other areas of learning, teachers need to identify the skills and knowledge they want the children to gain from each activity. By assessing how well the children

have learned teachers will be in a better position to plan for the next stage. Closer links between the morning and afternoon activities would provide real contexts in which children can use their literacy and numeracy skills.

## ENGLISH

84. In the 2000 national tests for 7-year-olds, pupils' attainment was below the national average in reading and broadly in line with the national average in writing. In both reading and writing, standards were below the national average at the higher levels of attainment. This represents a decline in reading standards when matched against the average over the previous three years. In comparison with similar schools, reading standards were below average, whilst writing standards were average.
85. In the 2000 national tests for 11-year-olds, pupils' attainment was average in comparison with national standards, but below average in comparison with similar schools. Standards were below the national average at the higher than expected levels of attainment. Since 1997, with one exception in 1998, standards have met the national average and matched the improving national trend.
86. Inspection evidence indicates a similar, but not identical, picture to that of 2000 for the current groups of pupils. In Key Stage 1, standards in reading and writing are just below average. In Key Stage 2, standards in reading are average, but in writing they are below average. Standards in speaking and listening are below expectations at Key Stage 1, but meet expectations at Key Stage 2. Throughout the school, many pupils achieve satisfactory levels of attainment, but the achievements of higher attaining pupils are often too low. Overall, progress over time in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. There is good progress by the end of Key Stage 2 in reading skills and in speaking and listening. This is because of the additional time provided and the wider range of curriculum activities in place, for example drama. There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. This is because of the high standards of support they receive. The standards being achieved in the current Year 6 are particularly pleasing as this group contains significantly more pupils with special educational needs than the previous one.
87. Speaking and listening standards in Key Stage 1 are variable. Most pupils are attentive and listen carefully. This is because teachers manage behaviour well and clear routines are in place. The more able pupils speak clearly, with understanding. For example, they identify a number of root vegetables, name them and explain the differences between them. Pupils of average and lower attainment respond clearly to direct questions. For example, most identify key words in a story. However, they find it more difficult to explain their work and express opinions because their range of vocabulary is limited. As they progress through the key stage, most pupils improve their pronunciation through reading in unison. In one class, pupils employ good expression when reading *Quiet in the Library*. Here, enthusiastic teaching provides effective encouragement and this leads to clear improvement in speaking.
88. In Key Stage 1, standards in reading are below average because too few pupils achieve the higher levels of attainment. The principle difference between these pupils and others is their accuracy, fluency and expression. They are able to comment on their reading confidently, demonstrating clear understanding of story and an ability to compare one with another. Most pupils are technically competent in reading, but a significant minority struggle to recognise key words. Many pupils are aware of the basic strategies for word recognition; for example breaking words down into phonic syllables. However, a number pay insufficient attention to punctuation and, because of

this, they lose the meaning as they progress. This in turn leads to hesitation and a loss of concentration. Most pupils have appropriate library skills for their age.

89. Standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 are below average because pupils' handwriting is not sufficiently well formed and punctuation lacks accuracy. Too few pupils achieve the higher levels in vocabulary and sentence structure. The higher attaining pupils use ideas effectively, for example when describing a 'treasure island' and writing an imaginative story. Other pupils plan their stories carefully and construct meaningful sentences, but their vocabulary is too restricted. Some pupils have yet to write independently, needing substantial guidance to write sentences. However, a number of the highest attaining pupils have good research skills. For example, they use dictionaries effectively to produce an information book on plants.
90. Standards in teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 are good. This is because all staff use the literacy strategy effectively. An important aspect of teaching throughout the key stage is the effective partnership with classroom assistants. This ensures pupils are well supported, especially those with special educational needs. The work of support teachers, for example in Year 1, provides the lowest attaining pupils full access to the National Curriculum, and enhances their provision. The strengths of classroom teaching lie in a good understanding of English and careful teaching of basic skills. Pupils are well managed, so that they are clear of what is expected of them. This has a positive impact upon attitudes and behaviour, and promotes effective learning. There are occasions where tasks set do not challenge the higher attaining pupils and planning for these pupils is not sufficiently influenced by on-going assessment. However, the overall impact of teaching is that most pupils are fully motivated. Standards for most pupils are improving steadily in comparison with their attainment on entry to Key Stage 1.
91. In Key Stage 2, standards in speaking and listening improve steadily and meet national expectations in Year 6. By the end of the key stage, most pupils speak clearly and with confidence. This is because they are given good opportunities to do so. In a lesson on limericks, pupils respond well to focused questions and quickly identify patterns in the language. They use these to good effect to offer varied contributions, which help improve the original verse. In another lesson, they listen carefully and identify the importance of language in poetry; one pupil recognising the word 'innocence' is the key to understanding where the poet's sympathies lie. Pupils speak confidently in a range of situations. In Year 5, they dramatise a well-known fable and express their feelings clearly. Younger pupils respond well to stimulating teaching. In a lower literacy set, they are challenged to define 'angelically' and also comment appropriately upon the character of the 'wicked wolf'. Pupils at a school council meeting illustrated how clearly some pupils speak when they made well-argued contributions to the meeting.
92. Standards in reading by the end of Key Stage 2 are average. Some of the more able pupils are achieving the higher than expected level in Year 6. These pupils are fluent and expressive and have a good range of strategies for word recognition. They display good understanding. They discuss their reading clearly, analysing plot and character in stories, and discriminate perceptively between different authors' writing styles. A good number of other pupils achieve the expected standard. They are technically competent and have good library skills. Those pupils who find reading difficult lack secure strategies for word recognition and do not read sufficiently to improve them. In other year groups, the distinguishing characteristic between the higher attainer and average reader is the breadth of their reading and the appreciation of character and plot. Reading standards improve steadily through the key stage, particularly when pupils become 'free readers'. Whilst library skills are adequate, the somewhat limited facilities

in the library hinder opportunities to develop research skills and a wider interest in reading.

93. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in writing are below average because too few pupils achieve the higher levels of attainment. However, the work of the majority of pupils in Year 6 meets, or nearly meets, the required standard. Many pupils write clearly, with a secure, joined, cursive script. This is because handwriting is carefully taught as they progress through the key stage. Some more able pupils achieve the higher standards, and there is a good range of writing in place. This includes poetry, biography and book reviews. Pupils are encouraged to analyse Shakespeare, for example investigating *Macbeth*. They compare the fantasy of *Alice in Wonderland* with *The Wizard of Oz*, writing effectively on this. They gain a good understanding of different poetic forms; for example demonstrating an ability to write 'Tanka' poems. Where standards fall below expectations, handwriting is not consistent, punctuation and spelling are weak and pupils' use of vocabulary is limited.
94. Standards of teaching and learning are good because teachers carefully and imaginatively plan most lessons and use appropriate resources. Teachers have a good knowledge of English and possess effective strategies for teaching basic skills. Questioning skills are good and this leads to rapid progress. For example, when discussing alliteration, pupils quickly offer suggestions, such as 'white as snow'. The good management of pupils contributes to their positive attitudes and behaviour. All this helps promote effective learning. The classroom assistants have a clearly defined role and form an effective partnership with the teacher. Support teachers provide good opportunities for pupils with special educational needs. This actively promotes their learning. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational need is excellent and ensures they have full access to the curriculum. Staff provide appropriate support within lessons for pupils who speak English as an additional language. Clear explanations ensure these pupils make satisfactory progress in their understanding of the English language.
95. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Overall, curricular opportunities are sound at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2, where an increasing focus on developing speaking and listening is helping raise standards. Good use is made of information and communication technology to promote writing. Insufficient use is made of using and developing pupils' literacy skills in other subjects. The curriculum makes a very good contribution to the development of pupils' social and cultural understanding, by encouraging drama and debate. Visiting theatre companies help widen pupils' horizons. Assessment procedures are good, although planning for higher attaining pupils is not sufficiently influenced by on-going assessment. Through extensive monitoring of performance, the school is able to set clear targets. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership. She has a secure view of priorities, has produced high quality documentation and provides good support to colleagues. Resources are mostly good. However, there is a number of reading books that need replacement. Satisfactory progress has been achieved since the last inspection. Improvements include the broader curriculum and the quality of teaching.

## MATHEMATICS

96. Over recent years, end of Key Stage 1 test results have fluctuated between average and below average; in 2000 they were below average. They were also below average in comparison with similar schools. Overall, standards by the age of seven in the current Year 2 are also below average and this marks a decline in comparison with the last inspection. While many pupils achieve the expected standard, the proportion achieving the higher standards is not high enough to maintain an overall national average performance. The teachers do not maintain high enough challenge for the higher attaining pupils. Consequently, many of these pupils continue to underachieve.
97. By the age of 11, standards are average and are comparable with the last inspection. End of Key Stage 2 test results show a sharp rise in standards since the well below average result of 1998. In 2000, the test results reached the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher standards, however, is still not high enough. As a result, the pupils' overall performance is below the average for similar schools. At age 11, there is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys. Matching teaching with the needs of pupils with special educational needs enables them to make good progress.
98. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound knowledge of place value to 100. However, very few pupils solve problems involving numbers to 1,000. They know some of the properties of common two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes, but only a small proportion of pupils apply this information to classify these. Pupils soundly communicate information in tables, block graphs or pictograms. By the age of 11, pupils quickly work out in their heads answers to number problems. For example, they work out  $60^2$  and  $0.8^2$ , and multiply and divide two-digit numbers by 100. However, a significant minority are less secure in mental arithmetic involving multiplication and division. Pupils have sound knowledge and understanding of fractions, decimals and percentages. However, few apply inverse operations to check answers and few use and interpret co-ordinates in all four quadrants. The teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities in these aspects. Pupils present information in a clear and organised way, but few tackle more complex problems. Their skills in using and applying mathematics are below average. Some higher attaining pupils know the sum of angles of a triangle or the sum of angles at a point on a straight line and most of them draw mirror reflections of simple two-dimensional shapes. Pupils soundly handle discrete data and record them using a frequency table. They construct and interpret line graphs, but few find and justify probabilities.
99. The quality of teaching and learning in the school overall is good. It ranges from satisfactory to very good. Teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 are satisfactory and in Key Stage 2 they are good. Most of the very good lessons are in Key Stage 2; at least one was observed in each year group. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and learning in mathematics in the school. Much of the teachers' effort in Years 1 and 2 goes into developing good behaviour and good class routines. These contribute significantly to the very good ethos for learning throughout the school. However, teachers do not sustain a higher level of learning challenge. Giving answers prematurely restricts pupils' thinking and their competency in mathematics. This is one of the main reasons for the underachievement of higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1.
100. Very good lessons are characterised by brisk sessions of mental mathematics. These challenge pupils according to their prior attainment, stimulate their intellectual involvement, and encourage and motivate them to make measurable progress. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, at the start only about half of the class could find out

answers to questions like  $8^2$  and only one pupil could calculate  $0.5^2$ . Within a few minutes most of the pupils understood the pattern and could instantly work out  $50^2$ ,  $60^2$ ,  $80^2$ ,  $0.6^2$  and  $0.8^2$ . In a lower ability Year 5 set, counting aloud by the whole class to and from 1,000 in lots of 25 built pupils' confidence. Subsequently, they confidently counted aloud from 400 to 1,000 and back in small groups according to their ability. Likewise, in the main lesson activity in the Year 6 set, the pupils tackled challenging work on multiples and factors. Many pupils in the lower ability Year 5 set started to work out, by trial and error and using a calculator, the consecutive numbers with a product of 30, 56, 132, and 240. Some of the weaker elements of teaching, and consequently of learning, include: diluting challenge by giving answers prematurely; use of incorrect subject vocabulary, for example 'collecting' rather than 'presenting' information; not asking pupils who have difficulty in expressing themselves to show their working on the board.

101. The teachers are secure in the elements of the National Numeracy Strategy and make an effective use of it in structuring the lessons and planning the content. All lessons begin with a brief and brisk session of mental mathematics. This is followed by the main lesson activity. There is good whole-class direct teaching and teachers use effective strategies to explain ideas to move pupils on. Time for independent practising of skills is sometimes cut short by lengthy expositions. Although all lessons end with a plenary session, its length is too variable for consistent effective use for assessing pupils' learning and attending to their difficulties. Occasionally, the curriculum planning is applied too rigidly. This results in the building up of gaps in pupils' learning; for example using Venn diagram to classify numbers according to their properties. The teachers manage pupils well and make good use of resources. They use time efficiently so that the lessons have good pace.
102. The use of information and communication technology is satisfactory, for example in drawing bar charts. There is some satisfactory use of mathematics in other subjects, for example in producing graphs and making measurements in science, though their use is not well developed. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive satisfactory support when required, with the result that they make similar progress to other pupils in their set. However, literacy skills in general often constrain pupils' success; for example in the understanding of word problems and of conceptual vocabulary, such as consecutive numbers.
103. Teachers have securely introduced the National Numeracy Strategy, which is improving the overall quality of teaching in the school. The curriculum provided meets the statutory requirements and the needs of most pupils in the school. However, greater rigour is needed to provide consistent challenge to higher attaining pupils, especially in the top sets. The assessment arrangements are good, though the use of this information for curriculum planning could be improved further to overcome gaps in pupils' learning and to provide a sustained challenge to the higher attaining pupils. The co-ordination of the subject has several strengths, for example the analysis of non-statutory tests in Years 3, 4 and 5 and informing teachers of the difficulties of the pupils in their new classes and for setting targets. However, the planned monitoring of teaching needs to inform the sharing of good practice across the school to raise standards.

## SCIENCE

104. Standards of attainment in science at the age of 7 are below the national average, whilst standards at the age of 11 are in line with the national average. This represents a decline in standards at Key Stage 1 since the last inspection. However, standards at both key stages have improved since last year because effective strategies for raising standards in science have only recently been in operation.
105. The results of teacher assessments in 2000 show that, by the age of 7, standards in science were well below the national average for both the expected and higher than expected levels of attainment. The test results for pupils at the age of 11 show standards were in line with the national average for the nationally expected Level 4. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level of attainment was below the national average. Consequently, overall attainment at the age of 11 was below average when compared nationally and with similar schools.
106. Inspection evidence shows that standards in science for pupils at the age of 7 are below the national average. This shows an improvement since the last assessments made nearly a year ago, when standards were well below the national average. Inspection evidence also shows that attainment at the age of 11 is in line with the national average, and this too represents an improvement since the last assessments and tests. The introduction of better guidelines for teachers and the setting of pupils in Year 6 have contributed to these improvements. At age 11, there is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs throughout the school make good progress because of the very good levels of support they receive.
107. Pupils in Year 1, studying sources of light, satisfactorily identify light derived from mains electricity or batteries. However, they were not fully aware that daylight, even when it is cloudy, comes from the sun until the teacher pointed it out to them. Whilst a few pupils suggested that lightning was a source of light they did not link the light with the sound of thunder. In Year 2, many pupils have an appropriate understanding of magnetism and can correctly explain what 'attract' and 'repel' mean. When studying forces, pupils can satisfactorily predict how far a toy car will travel after rolling down a slope, and some are aware that a force is pulling down even if they are unable to name it as gravity. Pupils describe simple features from their practical work, but do not clearly record what they have observed or make suggestions of how they may find out things for themselves. Their depth of knowledge and experimental skills are below that normally found by age seven.
108. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 3 investigating a collection of different types of plastic were good at keeping their discussions to the properties of the materials, rather than the colour or shape. When discussing what they had found out at the end of the lesson, they were aware that a plastic box with a lid could well be airtight and would not allow living things inside it to breathe. In Year 4, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the structure of a flower as well as the life cycle of a plant, and they are able to represent their knowledge with satisfactory and well-labelled diagrams. Pupils in Year 5 show a sound knowledge of magnets recalled from lessons in a previous year before they find ways of determining the strength of a magnet. They have a satisfactory knowledge of investigative skills and testing, and they know how to keep the test fair. Individuals discuss and argue well that their methods of testing are the most reliable.
109. A middle ability group in Year 6 satisfactorily found out about the link between chest expansion and lung capacity. They have good research skills when accessing books, CD-ROMs and the Internet for information. One special educational needs pupil with a

severe disability explained very clearly to the class the differences in her lung function and those of others. The class listened very attentively and this had a discernible impact upon their thinking. Towards the end of the lesson, small groups demonstrated to the class what they know about lung function through a variety of ways, such as oral and pictorial explanations, and a short play. The higher ability set for science in Year 6 is working specifically towards the higher levels of attainment, such as looking at the differences in structure between plant and animal cells. From talking to a group of these pupils and scrutinising their books, they show that they are coping satisfactorily with this level of work.

110. Overall, the teaching in science for pupils at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and in classes from Year 3 onwards it is generally good. This is reflected in the progress that pupils make. A contributory factor to the rate of progress of older pupils is the pace of the lesson; for example, in the classes where the lessons proceed briskly there is little wasted time. In a good Year 3 lesson on the properties of plastics and a good Year 4 lesson on plant life cycles, the teachers set time targets for work completion and, throughout the lessons, the emphasis was on learning.
111. In all classes throughout the school, pupils use science terminology correctly because all teachers are good at developing pupils' speaking skills in the subject. They ensure that pupils, including those with English as an additional language, understand all the words they use when answering questions. There are examples of good writing when pupils record and write up their investigations. However, the specific skills of succinct writing in science are insufficiently developed. Pupils are not transferring the writing for special purpose skills they acquire in literacy lessons to science recording and reporting. In Key Stage 1, there is insufficient emphasis on writing and presentation in science. The work all too frequently fails to communicate what pupils really know. In Key Stage 2, pupils learn to use large well-labelled diagrams to record and communicate ideas but, at present, the younger pupils are using drawings that are too small to show why they are using a diagram. Pupils make only limited use of their numeracy skills when conducting experiments.
112. All teachers have good questioning techniques that encourage pupils to think as well as to state what they know. In an effective Year 5 science lesson to determine the strength of a magnet, the teacher questioned the pupils to make them think about the practicality of their ideas for testing the magnets. Pupils are enthusiastic and show enjoyment in science lessons, largely as a result of the enthusiasm of the teachers. The management of the classes and good relationships between teachers and pupils raise pupils' self-esteem. This in turn contributes to the positive behaviour and attitudes seen in most science lessons. In a lesson on plant life cycles, a Year 4 teacher is skilful, through the excellent relationships and very good management techniques, in getting all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to give of their best at all times.
113. Teachers plan lessons from the good guidelines given in the recently completed scheme of work. Unfortunately, the space in the weekly planning document is too small to plan sufficient detail into the objectives and tasks. Teachers have high expectations for behaviour that contributes to the good working atmosphere in most classes. In all lessons, teachers plan work for differing ability groups including pupils with special educational needs. However, teachers do not sufficiently develop tasks to extend the higher attaining pupils in every class, and pupils are not sufficiently informed about what is expected of them to extend their skills and knowledge.
114. Analysis of test results for Years 5 and 6 has enabled teachers to set pupils in Year 6 into groups according to their ability. Teachers have established this procedure to help

more pupils achieve the higher levels of attainment in the national tests. At present, assessment procedures are in place, but teachers do not use them consistently through the school. The co-ordinator, who is giving a good lead to the subject, has recently developed a new system in order to more accurately target the needs of pupils as well as monitor the curriculum. Resources in science are adequate for the needs of this large school and they are well stored and maintained.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

115. Pupils' attainment in art is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. The pupils make satisfactory progress and reach standards that are appropriate for their ages, and sometimes are better. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to others in their class. There is no significant difference in the achievements of boys and girls. Standards in Key Stage 1 have been maintained since the last inspection and at Key Stage 2 standards have been improved. This is because of more careful use of sketchbooks by most pupils than was seen at the time of the last inspection. There has been some improvement in the subject expertise of teachers since the last inspection and there is more attention to the teaching of art and design skills. However, at Key Stage 2, there are still occasions when art is used merely as a supplement to other subjects and, on these occasions, less development of art skills takes place.
116. By the time pupils are seven, they have had experience of using a wide range of media and materials, including paint, fabrics and pastel crayons to express their ideas. In Year 1, pupils participate in large projects, such as a three-dimensional collage showing urban Wolverhampton contrasted with rural Kingswood. They make appropriate choice of colours to suggest the contrast between the two environments and paint is applied with a reasonable level of skill for their age. Choices of paint, paper and fabric are well made to produce interesting results. In Year 2, some pupils use their sketchbooks particularly well to explore different approaches to observational drawing of plants. Other pupils, however, tend to draw what they expect to see and do not observe their subject with sufficient care. Pupils use these drawings as a starting point for larger pieces of work in either fabric or paint. Paintings of hyacinths show a good understanding of how pupils can apply paint to achieve different effects. For example, carefully applied long strokes are used to suggest the leaves and dabbed brushwork applied to suggest realistically the small flowers.
117. At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to use the various media they have experienced at Key Stage 1. They show increasing control and skill over a widening range of materials and techniques. By the time they are 11, pupils are planning their art and design assignments with reasonable skill, recognising what problems they are likely to meet in managing a variety of media. They produce work that shows they have considered problems and possibilities and made thoughtful choices to achieve a desired effect. For example, pupils created hats to suit various imaginary characters. They portrayed the character through use of appropriate colours and shapes and achieved interesting arrangements of shape and line as well as evoking the personality of their chosen character. Pupils in Year 5 manage paint and crayon skilfully. They portray cold seas with a wide range of blue and white tones, and the application of cellophane in some compositions serves to further evoke the impression of ice and cold sea. Pupils have reasonable knowledge of the work of notable artists, such as Van Gogh and David Hockney. They study the techniques they use and apply them successfully in compositions of their own. For example, in Year 3, pupils studied a pen and ink landscape drawing by Van Gogh. They used this as a starting point for landscape drawings of their own, which were later developed into water-colour painting, using a wide range of green and green-blue tones effectively to portray a rural scene.

118. Teachers sometimes use art to support other subjects, such as history. When teachers make the teaching of art skills secondary to the needs of the other subjects, art skills are not so carefully developed. The quality of pupils' work is not of the same standard as that produced as part of an art focused project. For example, some pupils in Year 4 made Tudor masks. There was no evidence of detailed planning or development and the completed work showed little originality or skill. In contrast, pupils in another Key Stage 2 class made careful pencil drawings of musical instruments. They showed good attention to achieving realistic effect, making careful use of shading to indicate the roundness and solidity of the instruments. Here, although art had been linked to another subject, the teacher took care to further develop pupils' drawing skills.
119. The use of sketchbooks has improved considerably since the last inspection, although pupils are constrained because of the quality of paper in the sketchbooks, which is very thin. In most classes, sketchbooks are used appropriately and pupils make experiments with colour and line, and draft and sketch out their ideas, sometimes in several versions. Occasionally, in Years 3 and 4, the use of sketchbooks has not been monitored sufficiently, and pupils' rough initial ideas have not been sufficiently developed or evaluated.
120. Although only two lessons were seen during the inspection. Additional evidence was taken from discussions with teachers and pupils, scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with lessons occasionally being better than this. This promotes a pace of learning that is at least satisfactory and the quality of some work seen shows good development of art skills. Teachers of younger pupils introduce them to a wide range of resources, enabling pupils to appreciate the artistic possibilities of various media from an early age. Teachers in Key Stage 1 show imagination in the suggestions they make to pupils to help them to broaden their skills. For example, teachers provide pupils with small construction blocks to print the effect of brickwork and give them the choice of pen or pencil to make sketches of houses and pupils. This is effective in helping pupils realise early on that they need to choose different media to achieve different effects. In Year 2, pupils have been taught a good range of methods to use with paper and fabric, such as pleating and folding. Pupils were observed in Year 2 applying these methods to their fabric work effectively. The two lessons observed were well organised, with all the resources readily available. This enabled pupils to get started quickly and no time was wasted. In both lessons, pupils were encouraged to refer back to their preparatory work in their sketchbooks. The notes and drawings they had made were useful in developing their work further. Although there was evidence in sketchbooks of some evaluation of work, this was not so apparent in the lessons seen. At Key Stage 2, pupils were required to consider the practical problems they had encountered, but teachers gave them no opportunities to assess the artistic quality of their work.
121. A scrutiny of sample portfolios of work from all year groups shows a good variety of artwork, with many pupils achieving standards that are at least appropriate for their age. Although teachers have reasonable expectations of what pupils may achieve, they do not provide additional or different challenges for those who show the greatest skill at art. This means that the higher attaining pupils have little chance to achieve their full potential. Pupils' artwork is displayed around the school both in classrooms and in corridors. Work is carefully mounted, but often the arrangement of work is pedestrian and little is done to create displays of pupils' work that will have an impact or draw attention to its particular qualities.
122. The art co-ordinator has considerable expertise in this subject, manages the subject well and gives colleagues good support. She has put together several portfolios of

pupils' work. These provide exemplification of different levels of attainment and examples of good quality pupils' work to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, there are no agreed methods for assessment of pupils' progress in art and design. Currently the school is piloting a revised scheme of work that makes use of nationally produced guidelines. The co-ordinator recognises the need for further development and there are plans to review its effectiveness later in the school year. There is a satisfactory range of resources, although the quality of sketchbooks currently in use is poor. The subject is further enhanced by good opportunities for older pupils to visit art galleries and, from time to time, the school has an artist in residence. Such provision makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

123. Standards achieved by pupils aged 7 are below those expected for their age because they have not sufficiently developed their making skills. By the age of 11, better progress has been made and pupils achieve the expected standards for their age. Pupils with special educational needs receive satisfactory levels of support and this enables them to make sound progress. Overall, this represents a decline in standards since the last inspection. There are weaknesses in the planning of the curriculum.
124. In Year 1, pupils use simple techniques to fasten thin card together. For example, they use paper fasteners to fix the arms and legs onto a cut-out of a doll or teddy. Pupils decorate these using a narrow range of materials, including sticky paper, felt material and wool, to match the pictures they had initially drawn as designs. In Year 2, pupils draw simple designs, and higher attaining pupils add labels that identify major parts of their model. On their designs for a model vehicle made from recycled materials and pre-cut card wheels, they added labels such as 'a big box' and 'round wheels'. They understand that they need wheels and axles if their models are to move. Although the pupils take a pride in their finished models, the techniques they use to assemble and decorate them are at a lower level than normally found by this age. Pupils' basic skills, such as selecting materials and using simple tools, for example scissors, are not sufficiently well developed.
125. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils achieve standards more appropriate for their age. Pupils in Year 3 develop an understanding of products, as when investigating pictures of motor cars in order to identify the functions of different parts, such as the lights, bonnet, chassis and axle. Pupils satisfactorily develop an understanding of structures. In Year 4, for example, pupils examine different ways of constructing a model bridge, including beam, arch and suspension methods. They satisfactorily use a construction kit to test ways of making stronger shapes. The standard of designs pupils produce vary greatly. Most pupils achieve an appropriate standard for their age, for example in Year 5 when designing playground equipment. Pupils evaluate their designs thoughtfully, as when considering the strength of a model climbing frame and testing their own criteria for a model car. They use relevant making skills, for example when selecting appropriate materials and techniques to make puppets in Year 6.
126. Four lessons, all at Key Stage 2, were observed during the inspection. The quality of both teaching and learning was at least satisfactory and was good in half of the lessons. Teachers set high expectations of behaviour and their effective management of pupils results in good behaviour in lessons. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils ensure high levels of interest and effort. Teachers make satisfactory use of resources, though at times the range offered to pupils is too limited. Consequently, pupils do not learn to select for themselves appropriate materials for the activity. In the better lessons, teachers clearly identify the element of the subject they wish to develop. For example, a clear focus on the ways of making elbow and knee

joints for a puppet results in pupils thoughtfully discussing ideas and making good progress in their development of skills. Pupils with special educational needs receive good levels of support and this enables them to make good progress. Teachers make only limited use of pupils' numeracy skills; for example, opportunities to measure and cost materials are often missed.

127. The co-ordinator is currently reviewing the curriculum. Her draft overview of the subject ensures that pupils use a wide range of materials as they pass through the school. There are good links between design and technology and other subjects. The co-ordinator recognises the need to develop teachers' understanding of the subject. Their planning does not clearly identify both focused practical tasks, which develop particular skills and knowledge, and activities in which pupils design and make models for a specific purpose. For example, in a topic on book making, the emphasis is on the contents of the book rather than on practical ways to make a book. In making musical instruments, the focus is the musical aspect of the model rather than on developing specific practical skills. Similarly, when the design and make activity is one in which all pupils follow the same pattern, the pupils do not develop their skills of generating designs and selecting appropriate methods and techniques. For example, when pupils all use the same net to create the body of a model car the activity does little to develop their designing and making skills. The current lack of a clear progression in the practical skills that pupils are to learn is a contributory factor to the lack of focus in some lessons and the below average standards at Key Stage 1.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

128. At the time of the last inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 were in line with national expectations. They were below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Since then, standards have been maintained at the end of Key Stage 1 and have improved to average at the end of Key Stage 2. The school has addressed the previous weakness of below average standards at Key Stage 2, especially in Years 5 and 6, by improving the quality of teaching. The performance of boys and girls is similar and good support for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they make good progress.
129. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils have a sound knowledge of local places and means of transport. Higher attaining pupils can tell directions from a given place using eight compass points. The pupils read weather charts and are familiar with some of the symbols, for example for snow, sun, cloud and rain. They know the countries of the British Isles and their capital cities. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils have a sound knowledge of the subject. They describe location of places using latitudes and longitudes. The pupils use four-figure grid references and standard symbols to describe locations of places of geographical importance. They know the seven continents, location of European Community countries and some of the main world rivers, for example the Amazon and the Nile. They have sound vocabulary associated with the course of a river, for example 'tributary' and 'meander'. They have a sound knowledge of localities in distant places, for example the Caribbean.
130. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory in both key stages, though examples of good and very good lessons were observed. Throughout the school, the teachers set high expectations of pupils' behaviour and observation of class routines. These create a good learning ethos for all pupils in the school with the result that the teachers can concentrate more on teaching. In a very good lesson, which was in Year 1, the teacher explained what was expected of the pupils, and frequent checking ensured that they remained focused on what they were to learn. Sharing success and praise from time to time made learning enjoyable, developed confidence and improved

achievement, for example of the use of symbols and the importance of the key. Very good lesson structure and efficient use of time increased the pace and productivity. An effective discussion at the end of the lesson consolidated and celebrated learning. Challenging work requiring the use of secondary sources of information, ensuring pupils know what they are to learn, clear explanations and discussions of what constitutes a village produced good learning. Learning, however, was neither stimulating nor productive in lessons where the objectives were too vague and the teaching did not demand productive working.

131. The use of information and communication technology is sound, as is the link with literacy and numeracy. Management of geography is satisfactory. Current monitoring of teaching is informal and does not provide for sharing good practice. Teachers do not consistently plan the development of geographical skills into the current topic-based projects. This results in incidental progression of skills rather than by a planned programme. Teachers' informal assessment arrangements do not sufficiently inform curriculum planning to accelerate learning and achievement.

## HISTORY

132. Standards of attainment by the ages of 7 and 11 are in line with national expectations. The achievement of all pupils meets expectations for their age and satisfactory progress occurs throughout both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported in literacy and this has a positive impact upon their work in this subject. The school has maintained the standards observed at the last inspection.
133. By the age of 7, most pupils are aware that activities and processes change over time. They trace the development of agriculture and recognise how methods change, for example in ploughing fields. They have a sense of chronology and are able to sequence events. For example, they know that rail transport preceded air transport, and that the bicycle was a common form of transport before the motor car. Pupils begin to develop skills in using evidence and some are able to empathise with personalities from the past. They study the diaries of Scott and Amundsen to identify similarities and differences in their two polar expeditions. They begin to recognise personal qualities in individuals by considering the two explorers' reactions to events.
134. By the age of 11, pupils have a sound understanding of different periods in British and European history. They trace the development of British society through studying three contrasting periods: Roman Britain, the Tudors and Britain during the 1940s. This helps pupils to recognise the impact of the Romans on the development of towns and communications. A number of pupils write interesting accounts of Boudicca's revolt, from both her and a Roman's perspective. By studying the discovery and restoration of the *Mary Rose*, pupils gain good insights into how primary source material is used to reveal the past. Detailed work on the 1940s enables pupils to study the changing roles of men and women during wartime. They gain useful insights into wartime childhood by using empathy skills to investigate evacuation.
135. In Year 6, pupils study Ancient Greece. This provides good opportunities to investigate an ancient society that has influenced our values and beliefs. Pupils know how Greek society educated children, influenced science, created myths and constructed great buildings. Some useful links are developed through literacy, for example when pupils study the legend of *Theseus and the Minotaur*. Useful comparative work enables pupils to study the Olympics, where they investigate the origins of many modern sporting events. Overall, pupils acquire an appropriate range of historical skills, as well as a sound body of knowledge, as they move through the key stage,

136. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection. From these and other evidence, the standard of teaching is judged to be satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, there is effective use of everyday objects, such as flat irons, to show how change occurs over time. Good use is made of evidence, for example where pupils dress up to recreate a Victorian schoolroom. These opportunities promote effective learning as pupils gain a sense of the past. However, there is insufficient challenge for more able pupils in some tasks set. In Key Stage 2, some imaginative teaching occurs, for example where a teacher goes into role to promote an understanding of Roman Britain. This leads to good learning opportunities. Pupils make useful comparisons between the lives of rich and poor and discover that the Roman Baths promoted cleanliness and leisure. An effective follow-up lesson after a class visit provides good opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend their understanding of life in a Tudor manor house. One important aspect of teaching is the care taken to manage behaviour. This promotes positive attitudes amongst pupils and results in effective learning. From the work seen, it is clear that pupils enjoy this subject and work hard to achieve success.
137. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and provides a sound basis for teaching. Educational visits enhance the curriculum. The co-ordinator provides good leadership. She ensures that this subject is appropriately resourced. There is a clear policy document and scheme of work. These carefully map out the progression of skills, which teachers can monitor. Since the last inspection, assessment arrangements have improved.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

138. Standards of attainment in this subject are in line with national expectations for pupils at both 7 and 11 years. This shows an improvement since the last inspection when attainment for pupils by the age of 11 was below national expectations. The school has achieved this improvement through improving resources and good teaching that includes regular and consistent experience for all pupils, both boys and girls, throughout the school. The pupils benefit from a very good computer suite and each classroom having two computers, one of which has Internet access. In addition, pupils, including those with special educational needs, when they are back in the classroom make good use of the skills they learn in the suite in almost all subjects.
139. Most pupils have already learned in the reception classes to control the mouse and, as a result, pupils in Year 1 show confidence in what they are doing. They satisfactorily use a simple art program to create a picture, change colour and save their work. In Year 2, pupils enter data from a survey of front door colours in order to produce a graph in mathematics. They also have a computer book in which they write down the instructions for saving work and constructing a graph. In a satisfactory lesson in the computer suite, pupils in Year 2 entered data about car colours into a data-handling program to form a graph. However, it takes a long time for them to complete the task because their listening skills are not well developed. Later, at the end of the lesson, they satisfactorily explored choices of colour and how to label their graphs.
140. In a good Year 3 lesson, pupils made good progress in using a publishing program to produce a presentation to advertise the events being staged at the Coliseum in connection with their history project on the Romans. As a result of the effective teaching of the skills required, almost all pupils could operate the program unaided and satisfactorily inserted pictures to illustrate their work. In Year 4, pupils, including those with special educational needs, use the computers satisfactorily for their tasks in numeracy lessons. In the computer suite, this year group use their computer skills in a

spreadsheet program to incorporate both mathematics and science when calculating costs to plant up a garden. However, keyboard skills are not well developed and, for many pupils, they do not achieve as much on the computer compared to a manual approach. A group of pupils in Year 6, who have used a program to improve keyboard skills, explained that they preferred to work on the computer because they could work faster and achieve more output.

141. By Year 6, pupils have a good practical knowledge of the use of a multimedia package when developing a personal portfolio that includes a spreadsheet. They satisfactorily recall and use the commands in order to enter personal data, such as the results of their spelling tests. Pupils are confident and competent when using the Internet to research information for their project on the human body. The range of word-processing skills is satisfactory and includes using a variety of fonts, layouts and colours. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 use a word-processing program to write poems, newspaper reports and stories, as well as to develop posters and annotate pictures.
142. The quality of teaching in the subject is always satisfactory or better and the teaching from Year 3 onwards is always good. This has an impact upon the progress pupils make. Up to the age of seven pupils progress satisfactorily, but from Year 3 onwards their progress is good. A contributory factor is the pace at which teachers conduct lessons. In Key Stage 1, the pace is satisfactory, but from Year 3 onwards lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. Teachers show a sound developing knowledge of the subject, as observed in their demonstration skills and the way they support pupils at the computers. In an effective Year 3 lesson in the computer suite, the teacher had good demonstration skills using the large touch screen when skilfully showing pupils how to insert images. When pupils saw these images enter the screen for the first time the whole class expressed a 'Wow' with excitement. As a result they were informed and inspired to explore for themselves.
143. The teaching of basic skills in the subject overall is good and teachers check that pupils can carry out the procedures they are asked to do. Teachers are good at ensuring pupils understand the words they are using within the lesson and check that pupils use them correctly. A Year 4 teacher gave good support and instruction on keyboard and command procedures to a pupil with special educational needs. This resulted in the pupil achieving satisfactory results. The planning of lessons objectives is carried out satisfactorily. Teachers plan activities for the differing ability levels within the class, but what is provided for the higher attaining pupils does not sufficiently extend their learning.
144. Teachers have high expectations for behaviour and good management techniques that contribute to the good behaviour in classes. Teachers develop very positive relationships with pupils that encourage them to extend their efforts. However, whilst teachers' expectations for what pupils can achieve in the lesson is satisfactory, pupils, particularly the higher attaining ones, are not made sufficiently aware of what is expected of them.
145. Analysis of pupils' work in class portfolios shows that teachers cover all relevant strands of the information and communication technology curriculum. However, the aspects of control and sensing are underdeveloped. Assessment procedures are in place, although teachers have not fully implemented them through the school. The co-ordinator, who is part-time, is giving a good lead to the subject and beginning to monitor what is taught.

## **MUSIC**

146. Throughout the school, pupils achieve standards that are expected for their age groups. The school has maintained these standards since the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities continue to have the same opportunities to develop and enjoy their music lessons. Since the previous inspection, the music co-ordinators have worked together to introduce and implement two music schemes and the school has appointed a part-time music specialist. These steps have been effective in giving confidence to non-musical staff and ensuring that pupils follow a well-balanced curriculum. This is enhanced by a lunchtime choir and an after-school orchestra. A few pupils take instrumental lessons with a peripatetic music teacher. Staff modify each lesson according to pupils' achievement of the previous lesson's objectives, but have yet to develop a consistent means of recording their assessment.
147. Pupils in Key Stage 1 listen very carefully to the words and tunes of songs. This helps them to respond in unison with clear words and tuneful voices to their Easter hymns and an action song about the rain. Pupils in Year 1 choose suitable percussion instruments to represent rain sounds after listening to recordings of rainy weather. They enjoy performing to a piano accompaniment following the directions of a 'conductor'. Pupils in Year 2 clap and play on wood blocks a repeated rhythmic pattern with good timing to *Jesus the King is risen*. They enjoy their lessons and take good care of the musical instruments.
148. In Key Stage 2, pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm to their well-organised lessons. They enjoy singing lively songs, such as *It takes a lot of hands* and *Mrs O'Leary's Lantern*. Pupils in Year 3 make a very good effort at fitting complex words to this fast rhythm and their voices sound pleasant and tuneful. They develop a good understanding of time values by reading notes to the syllables of 'coffee', 'tea' and 'cre-ea-m' (quaver, crotchet, minim). Pupils make a good attempt to play from this notation and vary the expression in response to musical flashcards. They recognise that 'piano' and 'forte' mean soft and loud, and interpret staccato as 'spiky' playing. In Year 6, pupils concentrate well when evaluating the characteristics of a recording of jazz piano music. In groups, they suggest their own word rhythms, such as 'ad-ven-tur-ous' and 'liter-a-cy' and many can play them across the syncopated jazz rhythms. They try to compare sounds of early music with modern instruments as they listen to shawm and hurdy-gurdy sounds in a Tudor music recording. Recordings of the pupils' work would make a useful contribution to an assessment portfolio and allow pupils to evaluate their work.
149. The satisfactory teaching in Key Stage 1 reflects the teachers' confidence in presenting appropriate elements of the music scheme, supported by the competent piano accompanist. Well-prepared and organised lessons mean that pupils understand exactly what is required of them. They respond with exuberance to a Year 1 teacher's lively manner and actions. However, all lessons observed were heavily directed, with little opportunity for experiment. Control and organisation sometimes has a higher priority than music making.
150. The overall quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is good, ranging from satisfactory to very good. The very good teaching of the part-time music specialist has a positive effect on pupils' learning. This is due to a combination of direct teaching and demonstration lessons alternating with class teachers. The lively pace of the good lessons holds pupils' interest and motivates them. Teachers have high expectations and offer good opportunities for practice. This leads to perseverance and a noticeable improvement in performance. Their sensitive encouragement helps even the shyest pupils to develop confidence.

151. The good teamwork of the co-ordinators, together with the comprehensive music scheme, is making a strong contribution to the improvement of the curriculum. When the computer compatible keyboards are added to the school's resources these will add to pupils' composing and improvising opportunities.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

152. Most pupils aged 7 and 11 achieve the expected standards for their age. The school has maintained these average standards since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs receive good levels of support and this enables them to make good progress.
153. Pupils in Year 1 develop appropriate co-ordination for their age, as when kicking and trapping a large ball. A small number of pupils show good levels of skill as they pass the ball accurately to their partners and trap the ball cleanly when it is returned. When using large apparatus in gymnastics, pupils in Year 2 perform basic movements, such as jumping, swinging and climbing. They satisfactorily control their bodies and have an appropriate awareness of safety and the space around them.
154. In Key Stage 2, pupils achieve satisfactory levels of attainment in gymnastics, games and swimming, and many achieve good standards in dance. Pupils in Year 5 demonstrate satisfactory co-ordination when they practise the five basic jumps. For example, they take off from two feet and land on one foot maintaining sufficient balance and poise to complete the movement successfully. In games, pupils develop their hand-eye co-ordination when using tennis racquets and a small ball. Pupils in Year 4 successfully balance the ball on the face of the racquet as they move slowly around the playground. They find it more difficult to hit a ball that their partner has thrown to them. In Year 6, most pupils use the correct 'handshake' grip when holding a racquet. They are slightly more successful in returning the ball to their partners. Their skills in this aspect are not well developed by the age of 11 years. However, both boys and girls demonstrated good levels of achievement in dance lessons. They successfully control their movements and express their ideas. For example, pupils in Year 3 successfully work at different levels and move to the rhythm of the music as they portray life in a Celtic village during the time of the Roman invasions. In Year 4, pupils use their good knowledge of relevant dance steps, including single-step, double-step and reverence, to create interesting dances similar to those performed traditionally in Tudor times.
155. The school operates an adequate programme for swimming. Pupils in Year 4 have a weekly swimming lesson at a nearby secondary school for two out of the three terms. They develop their confidence in water and more-able swimmers learn water safety and survival techniques. By the end of the year, most pupils can swim 25 metres
156. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory and often good. Learning was at least satisfactory in the lessons observed and was good in almost half. Teachers show an awareness for safety. They begin lessons with an appropriate warm-up that raises pupils' heartbeat and gently stretches their muscles, and end lessons with a cool-down activity. Consequently, pupils are aware of the changes that happen to their bodies during exercise. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations of behaviour and they manage the pupils very well. This results in good levels of behaviour in lessons. Occasionally, teachers do not ensure that all pupils are attentive, allowing them to work with a level of noise that is too high. This results in pupils being easily distracted, the standard of behaviour drops and the pace of learning within these lessons slows. Teachers make good use of encouragement, for example, in giving a non-swimmer the confidence to take her feet off the bottom of the pool and swim on her back. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. A teacher, for instance, sensitively

gave support to a pupil with physical difficulties so that she could make good personal progress in a gymnastics lesson.

157. There are very good relationships between pupils and teachers. In the best lessons, teachers display good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic. Consequently, pupils have very positive attitudes, show good levels of concentration and work hard at improving their performance. For example, in a swimming lesson, pupils made good progress in developing their stroke and breathing techniques because of the teacher's expertise. Teaching is significantly better in lessons where there is a clear focus on the specific skill to be taught. In the Year 5 gymnastic lesson on jumps, the emphasis on specific jumps and landings resulted in high levels of physical effort and pupils making good progress. In the Year 3 dance lesson, the teacher reinforced throughout the lesson the aim of working at different levels. Consequently, pupils created an interesting range of movements that made good use of the space around them. Where the teachers' lesson objectives are less clear, and reflect their longer-term plans rather than what it is they want the pupils to learn in the lesson, teaching is less effective and the rate of pupils' learning is reduced. In these lessons, pupils are physically active, but are not improving their physical skills as well as they could be.
158. The subject co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is enthusiastic. In the current review of the subject, he has ensured there is a clear overview of the curriculum that includes all relevant activities. He recognises the need to identify more specifically the skills that pupils should learn as they move through the school, so as to ensure good progression in pupils' learning. Currently, there is no whole-school procedure for assessing pupils' progress. This current lack of guidance is one of the reasons why some lessons lack a clear focus, which in turn impacts on the effectiveness of the teaching. Overall, resources are adequate for the teaching of all activities; they are sufficient for the current number of pupils and most are of a satisfactory quality or better.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

159. By the ages of 7 and 11, all pupils are attaining standards that are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. There is no significant difference in the achievements of boys and girls in religious education. Throughout both key stages, pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, enjoy this subject, work hard and make sound gains in their learning. Standards seen at the time of the last inspection have been maintained at both key stages.
160. As pupils progress through Key Stage 1, they begin to appreciate that people belong to different faiths. Teachers ensure that pupils have interesting opportunities to develop this understanding. For example, pupils visit places of worship. They take part in drama and discussion about the aspects of the subject they are studying, as when considering how people of different faiths pray. By the age of seven they have, for their age, a secure knowledge of the principle events in the life of Jesus and important aspects of Christianity. Their understanding of key aspects of Islam and Hinduism is satisfactory. They are beginning to appreciate that ceremony is present in religious faith and that food plays an important part in celebration. For example, they understand that special meals are part of Hindu, Muslim and Christian celebration. Teachers make links between pupils' experiences and what religion has to say about them. Pupils in Year 1 explored the idea of 'new life', linking it to springtime, spring lambs and eggs. They then went on to make the connection with the Christian celebration of Easter and the belief that Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Day.

161. As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils learn more about key aspects of Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam, building on the work they have covered at Key Stage 1. Their knowledge of the aspects of the religions they study is thorough. They are able to make sensible links between different religions, and apply what they have learnt in earlier years to their current learning. Pupils in Year 5 consider the Sikh rules for living and then devise their own 'rules for the world' that show good levels of awareness of environmental issues as well as an understanding of right and wrong. As they get older they recognise that the major faiths have much in common, such as approaches to prayer and the importance of ceremony and symbolism in faith. In Year 6, pupils understand that prayer beads are used in Islam and Christianity, and make comparisons and contrasts between Sikh and Christian prayers. They understand that religious belief can impact on people's behaviour. Pupils' written work is well presented and provides a good record of what they have learnt about religion. During lessons, teachers invite pupils to reflect on the significance of what they have learnt. Pupils' perceptive responses, and the manner in which they value and consider ideas about faiths other than their own, show that this aspect of the subject is being addressed consistently throughout the key stage. However, pupils are given few opportunities to explore and express their responses in writing. Written work undertaken by Year 6, for example, considered the damage of pollution to the world, but included no comments on the pupils' points of view about this issue.
162. Overall, teaching is good. The best lessons are very good, occasional lessons are satisfactory. Most teachers are skilful at setting a calm and reflective atmosphere in religious education. It is evident to the pupils that their teachers value what ideas the pupils have to offer. This approach engenders confidence in pupils to express their own ideas and attitudes, and they listen to others' views well. Pupils in Year 5 were fascinated to learn about 'the five Ks' (five symbols) of Sikhism. They handled the Sikh artefacts that the teacher shared with the class with care and respect. They listened with interest to the teachers' explanations and readily grasped the idea of the seamless bangle representing eternity and the eternal. Most teachers have a good level of subject knowledge; they prepare well for their lessons and make the most of the artefacts from the school's collection of resources. In Year 6, pupils were fascinated by the wide collection of aids to prayer that they had the opportunity to consider and discuss. These included rosary beads, an icon, and an incense holder. In the less successful lessons, although teachers' planning states that the principle objectives are primarily linked to religious education another supporting subject tends to dominate and the lessons' objectives are not fulfilled. A lesson at Key Stage 1 about Palm Sunday included making paper *palm leaves*, but all the pupils and the teacher became so absorbed with achieving realistic palm leaves that the purpose of the exercise was lost. In a lesson in a parallel class on the same theme, the practical activity was not allowed to dominate the lesson and, by the end, the pupils showed a good understanding for their age of the significance of Palm Sunday. Similarly, in a Key Stage 2 lesson, the teacher's concerns about pupils recounting events in the story of Noah and the flood, lost sight of the purpose of the lesson. This was to consider the impact of the flood on people of faith. This was in spite of some perceptive comments by the pupils, during the initial discussion, about the seriousness of broken promises. These themes, if developed, had the potential to lead to some thoughtful and relevant written work. Frequently, the marking of pupils' written work focuses exclusively on issues of literacy and none of the comments focus on improving the pupils' grasp of religious education.
163. The co-ordinator has a good level of expertise and she manages the subject well. She has a good oversight of the subject through the monitoring of planning and the scrutiny of samples of pupils' work. There is a detailed scheme of work, which ensures that the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus are fully met and gives teachers a good level of detail that should provide useful support for lesson planning. However, there

are no whole-school arrangements in place for assessing the progress that pupils are making in the subject. The satisfactory level of resources was carefully chosen to support the curriculum and are well used by the teachers. The subject is enhanced by visits to places of worship in the locality, by visits to school from representatives of different faiths and by assemblies that are frequently linked to religious education themes. The subject makes a good contribution to all aspects of the pupils' personal development.