

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GRACE MARY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Tividale, Oldbury

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103945

Headteacher: Mr Jim Mumford

Reporting inspector: Mr Robert Greatrex  
19924

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> February 2001

Inspection number: 197771

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Morris
Date of previous inspection:	29 <sup>th</sup> September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19924	R. J. Greatrex	Registered inspector	Mathematics Geography History Physical education Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Information about the school The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further
19335	S. M. Dixon	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22157	M. Rousel	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Music Provision for pupils with special educational needs The work of the special educational needs unit	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
8073	L. Simmons	Team inspector	English Art and design Religious education Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage Equality of opportunity	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Grace Mary is about average in size with 211 boys and girls on roll, from 4 to 11 years of age. It also has a purpose-built nursery with 38 part-time children. Attainment when children first join the nursery covers a wide range but is well below average overall. Eighty-three pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, a proportion above the national average. The school has 72 pupils identified as having special educational needs, a proportion also above the national average. Eight pupils have statements of special educational needs, well above the national average. There are a very small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school has a good reputation amongst the local community.

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

Grace Mary is a good school. Standards are rising steadily, although they are still well below the national average in English. Mathematics and science have shown good improvement in the recent past. They are now just below and above average respectively. The quality of teaching is very good overall and an important factor in the good progress pupils are making. The headteacher, staff and governors work closely together to give the school a clear educational direction. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- The quality of teaching is very good and one reason pupils make good progress overall. Able support is given by skilled and dedicated nursery nurses and classroom learning assistants.
- The nursery and reception classes give children a very good start to their education.
- Teamwork amongst staff is strong and all are committed to doing their best for their pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, as are relationships with each other and staff.
- The school looks after its pupils very well, particularly before school and at lunchtime.
- The partnership with parents is very strong.

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

- Standards in English remain low and need to improve further\*.
- The school does not use subject co-ordinators effectively, particularly to improve subjects\*.
- The school does not make best use of the deputy/headteacher/special educational needs co-ordinator's time.

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

*\* These areas for improvement have already been identified by the school.*

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

Satisfactory improvement has been made since the school was inspected in 1997. Pupils' writing is improving slowly but more needs to be done to improve both reading and writing. Basic numeracy skills have improved a lot. Pupils' progress is now better monitored and assessed so teachers have a much clearer understanding of how well their pupils are doing. Some procedures, however, are only recently introduced. Curriculum planning is much better. However, neither teaching nor learning have been monitored sufficiently and knowledgeable subject co-ordinators still rely on second-hand information when planning developments. Some improvements have been made to the accommodation, but the library is still inadequate and teachers cannot teach information and communication technology (ICT) efficiently. Both have a negative impact upon how well pupils do. Given the very good teaching and steady improvements, the school has good capacity to improve further.



## 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	D	E	D
mathematics	E	E	D	B
science	E	E	B	A

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

Standards reached by eleven-year-olds in 2000 were well below average in English, below average in mathematics and above average in science. When compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, they were below average in English, above average in mathematics and well above average in science. There has been a steady year-on-year improvement over the last four years which is faster than the rate of improvement nationally. The majority of pupils who took these tests in 2000 exceeded the rate at which pupils are expected to improve from when they took the tests at seven, while in English they equalled it. Given the generally well below average standards when pupils start in the nursery, and the relatively high number who join the school much later, these results are good in science, satisfactory in mathematics, but below what is expected in English. The targets set for 2000 were exceeded in mathematics, but the school was a little below the target set in English. Targets set for 2001 and beyond are challenging. In the work seen during the inspection, with good support and teaching, most pupils were working at the level expected for their age. When working independently, however, standards are not as high, particularly in English.

Standards reached by seven-year-olds in 2000 were well below average in reading and writing, and below average in mathematics. Current standards in Year 2 are broadly average, despite the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. This represents good progress from when they join the school.

Current standards show improvement in numeracy and literacy. The literacy hour and numeracy lesson are both used well and this is beneficial to pupils' standards. Through a good range of relevant practical activities, pupils are achieving well compared with their prior attainments. Through investigation and experimentation, science standards are good. Standards are satisfactory in religious education and in those strands of ICT that are taught. In other subjects, standards are good in art and design, music and physical education. Standards are satisfactory in all other subjects. Progress of pupils with special educational needs is good compared with their prior attainment levels and these pupils take part fully in all lessons and activities, enabling them to reach these comparatively good standards.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very positive. They want to learn. When they find school work hard, they persevere and do their very best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons is very good and this is beneficial to their learning as no time is wasted. Around the school, pupils behave very well and everyone is able to enjoy times such as playtime.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils enjoy responsibility and are always willing to help. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. A very small proportion of pupils is often absent.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching at Grace Mary is a strength of the school and one of the main reasons things are improving. During the inspection, no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Eight lessons out of every ten seen were good or better, half were very good or excellent. This is a high proportion and an improvement since the previous inspection. Parents agree that the quality of teaching is good. This was the view expressed by every parent who responded to the inspection questionnaire.

English and mathematics are both taught well. Good opportunities are given for pupils to practise and improve their speaking and listening skills in lessons. The teaching of literacy is good. In the younger classes particularly, pupils are given a very good grounding in the basic skills they need, although more needs to be done to teach reading skills to the less able. The daily mathematics lesson is also well taught. Lessons get off to a particularly good start during quick fire question and answer sessions. This was a skill criticised during the previous inspection that is now taught much better. Very good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs by well trained and skilled nursery nurses and classroom learning assistants. These pupils work at a good pace and no time is wasted because they get the help they need when they need it. More able pupils also have a curriculum carefully tailored to their individual needs. All of these pupils are enthusiastic about their learning because tasks are relevant.

Teaching is clearly effective for many other reasons, too. Teachers have the knowledge and understanding to teach clearly, so pupils understand better. They use practical activities whenever possible, so all pupils, but particularly those with limited vocabulary, can understand more clearly. Planning is much better than when the school was previously inspected, consequently there is a very good match of work to pupils' abilities, so it is neither too hard nor too easy. They use a good variety of methods, so pupils are always interested. Visits and visitors, like practical tasks, give pupils very good visual understanding and engage

their interest. Back in class, this enthusiasm continues and learning is good. Pupils can recount with good detail where they went, who they met, what they learnt, many months later. Marking generally gives pupils a very clear understanding of what they have done well, and where they need to concentrate next. Homework, other than how reading books are used, is carefully matched to work in lessons so that it is relevant and useful.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is much better planned than when the school was previously inspected. Extra curricular activities are of good quality.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school is fully committed to the inclusion of all pupils fully in the life of the school, and this is particularly effective. Provision is good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Support is good, from the school and outside agencies. Tasks match pupils' needs well and they make good progress. Much is done to see that limited English knowledge does not affect learning in other subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is very good in all aspects. Pupils have many very good opportunities to take responsibility in the school community. They learn to help and care for one another well. Pupils are also given good opportunities to learn about the values and beliefs of others. Visits and visitors are used very effectively.
How well the school cares for its pupils	From the breakfast club, through lessons and well-equipped playtimes to the after school provision, the school cares for its pupils very well. Assessment is used increasingly effectively to track pupils' progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, ably supported by staff and governors, gives the school a very clear educational direction. Teamwork is very strong and the basis of much of the school's success. There is a real desire to improve, although subject co-ordinators are not used sufficiently. There is a good number of teachers and a very good number of support staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfill their responsibilities effectively. They know what is good about the school, and what needs improving. They are supportive of the school, whilst still questioning what is being done.
The school's evaluation of its performance	More is evaluated than when the school was last inspected, although more still needs to be done. Challenging targets have been set.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are generally used well and much is done to target funds directly into improving pupils' opportunities. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value. However, better use could be made of the deputy headteacher/special educational needs co-ordinator's time. Accommodation is good overall but the library is still inadequate and ICT cannot be taught efficiently. Other resources are generally satisfactory.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• Good progress is made by their children at school</li> <li>• Behaviour is good in the school</li> <li>• Teaching is good</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable raising questions or problems with the school</li> <li>• Parents like the school's high expectations that their children will do their best</li> <li>• Parents like the way the school helps their children to become more mature and responsible</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the 46 responses to the inspection questionnaire, parents raised no particular concerns. At the meeting held for parents before the inspection, parents felt that the inadequate library and lack of computer facilities adversely affected how well their children do in these subjects.</li> </ul>

Parents overwhelmingly support the school. They feel the school has improved over the last few years, and their children all enjoy their time at Grace Mary. Several parents gave inspectors accounts of how their children, unhappy elsewhere, had changed dramatically in the caring atmosphere of Grace Mary. Inspectors share parents positive views of how happy and contented their children are at the school, and how good teaching is. Inspectors also share parents' views that the library and computer facilities and equipment are inadequate.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Overall standards are below average when compared with schools nationally. By the end of Key Stage 2, there has been a steady year-on-year improvement over the last four years that is better than the national trend, although the school is coming from a lower starting point. At the end of Key Stage 1, there has been a steady improvement in mathematics, a dramatic recent improvement in writing but little change in reading which remains well below the national average. Pupils' mobility is comparatively high, for example eight pupils have joined the Year 6 class in the last year and a half. These pupils have not benefited from the full school's curriculum. The progress of those who have, for example the improvement in test results from age seven to age eleven, is better than average. The school has correctly identified English as a subject for improvement, particularly writing. Even so, greater emphasis needs to be given to raising pupils' standards in reading.

2. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000, a little over half of the pupils reached the level expected for pupils of their age in English, whereas approximately three-quarters of pupils nationally reached this level. The proportion of pupils reaching a higher level, too, was well below the national figure. In mathematics, approximately seven in every ten pupils reached the expected level, nearly as many as the national average. However, the proportion reaching a higher level was much lower. In science, approximately nine in every ten pupils reached the expected level, a proportion above the national average. The proportion reaching a higher level, too, was above average. When results are compared with those of pupils from similar backgrounds, they are below average in English, above average in mathematics and well above average in science. There is no significant trend in the relative performance of boys and girls over the last four years. The school exceeded the target set for it in mathematics in 2000, but fell a little short of the target set in English. Targets set for the next two years are challenging, particularly in English.

3. In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, seven in every ten pupils reached the expected level in reading, whereas approximately seventeen in every twenty pupils nationally reached this level. In writing, nearly eight in every ten pupils reached the expected level, whilst the national figure was similar to that for reading. In mathematics, nine in every ten pupils reached the expected level, a proportion identical with the national average. In reading and writing, the proportion teaching a higher level is well below the national average, and in mathematics it is below average. When results are compared with those of pupils from similar backgrounds, they are well below average in reading, average in writing and above average in mathematics. In science, in assessments done by their teachers, eight out of every ten pupils reached the expected level, whereas nationally this proportion was approximately nine out of every ten.

4. Children under five enter the school with a wide range of attainment levels and previous experiences, but overall attainment is well below average. Standards are particularly low for basic skills such as communication, language and literacy, and personal, social and emotional development. These skills are particularly important to their future learning. This slows progress, although good induction means children settle in quickly. The well-planned

curriculum with tasks that meet all children's needs, coupled with very good teaching, leads to good progress throughout the Foundation Stage. Children with special educational needs also benefit from the close match of tasks to their abilities. All adults in both classes work well together and give good support, advice and encouragement to the children. All these factors are significant in the good progress children make. By the time they enter school, standards are much improved, although still well below average in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world, and below average in physical and creative development. This is similar to the very good picture when the school was previously inspected, and the work with children under five was a strength.

5. Inspection evidence suggests that recent improvements are being maintained. Throughout the school, pupils are working at the correct level and reaching good standards compared with their prior attainment. Standards in lessons seen are broadly average at the end of Key Stage 1 and a little below average at the end of Key Stage 2. The progress that pupils make is now better overall than when the school was previously inspected in 1997.

6. Standards in literacy are below average overall. All elements of the literacy hour are in place. These lessons are effective, largely because of good planning and good teaching. Standards in the 'tools' of reading and writing are below average and this has an adverse effect upon pupils' standards elsewhere, particularly in the academic subjects. In reading, pupils do not take the same book home to read as they read in school, and this hinders the progress of younger and beginner readers especially. The library, judged inadequate at the time of the previous inspection, remains so and is another inhibiting factor as pupils cannot browse or research. On the other hand, good use is made of classroom learning assistants and volunteers to give pupils regular practise. In writing, standards are much improved in the recent past and the analysis of pupils' work suggests the momentum of improvement is increasing. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection, largely because a good range of relevant writing opportunities is provided, for example in history, and good emphasis on handwriting and presentation has raised standards. Even so, standards are below average, particularly in grammar and punctuation, and much writing is simplistic.

7. Standards in numeracy are satisfactory overall, and a good proportion of pupils in all classes are reaching satisfactory standards in mental computation. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when raising standards in mental mathematics was a key issue. The three part numeracy lesson is well taught and a significant factor in pupils' good progress is their enthusiasm and eagerness to participate. Number skills are used well in other subjects, for example the use of graphs.

8. Throughout the school, pupils' with special educational needs make good progress. Individual educational plans, drawn up by the class teacher with advice from the co-ordinator, meet pupils' differing needs. Appropriate targets are set for pupils. Support from class teachers and classroom learning assistants is of very good quality and this, coupled with the positive attitude of most pupils, results in good progress.

9. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make good progress. Tasks are carefully matched to their needs. Whether working with outside specialists, class teachers or learning support assistants, the progress of these pupils benefits from carefully structured activities that practise and then extend what they know already.

10. Pupils with high attainment levels are well catered for and make good progress. In Year 6, for example, the most able mathematicians reach high standards partly because their needs are met through activities that challenge them to use their knowledge and ability to reason logically, and to apply what they know to new situations. Although pupils benefit, these sessions are insufficient. The curriculum is meticulously planned so that pupils receive activities tailored to their needs in areas where they are particularly strong. This, too, is very beneficial to their learning.

11. Standards in science are good overall, although the current Year 6 are reaching broadly average standards. Standards in practical science, involving experimentation and investigation, are particularly strong. In ICT, pupils reach satisfactory standards overall although the greater emphasis on word processing than other strands of the subjects leads to better progress in that element. Standards are lowest in control technology and use of databases. Standards are hampered, to some extent, by the mixture of equipment and the lack of adequate accommodation for teachers to be able to teach skills to their classes. In religious education, pupils reach standards in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' knowledge is now much broader than when the school was previously inspected. Standards in art and design are good and weaknesses highlighted at the previous inspection have been remedied. In design and technology, standards are satisfactory and this represents an improvement in older classes since the previous inspection. In geography, standards are satisfactory and good use is made of visits to give pupils practical experiences. They learn, and remember much from these opportunities. In history, good use is made of artefacts and other sources of firsthand evidence which fascinate pupils and lead to good standards in enquiry skills. In music, standards are good. Pupils receive specialist teaching and this is beneficial to the good rate of learning. In physical education, standards are also good. Pupils are fully involved in their own learning and regularly enjoy very good teaching which helps them perfect techniques.

12. Standards benefit from the good emphasis on the practical, using concrete examples, which help to overcome the limited language skills of many pupils. The impact of pupils' low standards in the key skills of reading and writing is therefore kept to a minimum. Good use is also made of visits and visitors to present learning in a visual and stimulating fashion. This, too, has a positive impact on pupils' learning, particularly their understanding.

13. Every parent who replied to the inspection questionnaire agrees that their children make good progress at Grace Mary. This is an improvement upon the views of parents at the previous inspection. At the meeting for parents held before the inspection, parental views were equally positive. Although inspectors agree that progress is generally good, there are comparative weaknesses. Whilst the school has rightly identified writing as a cause for concern and much is being done to raise standards, speaking and reading are also of a generally lower standard and improving slower than writing.

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

14. Pupils attitudes to school and school work are very positive, and their behaviour is very good. Their personal development is also good. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, are very positive. At the time of the previous inspection, this aspect was a strength of the school, and it continues to be so.

15. Children in the Foundation stage settle in quickly and move between classes confidently. They respond very well to the encouragement they are given to take responsibility. Whether choosing their own activities, taking turns and sharing, or putting equipment back where they found it, they quickly start to develop personally, socially and emotionally as successful members of the school community.



16. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work. Pupils come to school eager to learn, lessons and activities are approached with great enthusiasm. This has a positive effect upon their learning and creates a purposeful atmosphere. In lessons, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. Throughout the school and in the nursery, pupils work hard and concentrate well throughout lessons. Pupils work alongside each other amicably and willingly offer help and encouragement to their classmates. For example, in a Year 3 English lesson where the teacher and assistant took on the identity of a character from their story. Pupils discussed possible questions with their partners in their attempts to guess which characters were represented. As pupils progress through the school they gain the skills needed to become independent learners. Pupils can use reference books well and access information from computers and the Internet. Throughout the school, pupils show genuine appreciation for the success of others. The high value placed upon pupils and their achievements is evident through attractive displays of their work and in the celebration of each other's work in assemblies.

17. The behaviour of all pupils is very good, this has a beneficial effect upon their learning and upon the school community as a whole. Behaviour is consistently very good in lessons, assemblies and at lunchtimes. When out of school on visits and residential courses the school receives very positive letters of commendation; pupils are described as very well behaved, highly motivated and very good at working together in groups. The school rules are well understood and reflect the discussions that pupils are involved in. Praise and reward for good work and behaviour are used very effectively to promote good behaviour, to motivate pupils and to instil pride and confidence. Pupils treat the resources and equipment they use with care and respect and have proved themselves trustworthy. There have been no exclusions in the past year but appropriate procedures are in place should they be needed.

18. The relationships amongst all members of the school community are very good. Adults in school present good role models and pupils are treated with care and respect. This is reflected in the pupils who are polite and helpful towards each other and to adults. Lunchtimes are sociable and pleasant. Outdoor play is happy and orderly with no evidence of conflict. Parents feel that the very good relationships that exist are a particular feature of the school and have a positive effect on their children in their lives outside school.

19. Pupil's personal development is very good. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to take responsibility and to develop maturity and an understanding of their rights and responsibilities as members of a community. In a Year 2 physical education lesson, pupils were given floor plans that enabled them to place the gymnastics equipment needed themselves. They learnt to work as a team and to take some responsibility for their own learning. Older pupils take their additional responsibilities seriously and act as very good examples to younger ones. Opportunities are provided for pupils to express their opinions and feelings and they grow in confidence as they progress through the school. Pupils learn to respect others' values and beliefs and are encouraged to consider carefully the effect of their actions on others. The provision for personal and social education provides good support for this area.

20. Attendance rates match the national average and are satisfactory. Pupils are eager to come to school and most pupils arrive on time. Registration is efficient and this time is well used for a variety of activities and personal study. Parents provide the school with good information about absences that are largely due to childhood illness. There are, however, a

significant number of parents who take holidays in term time. Given the good quality of teaching, this has a detrimental effect upon the learning of these pupils. There is a very small number of pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern. Appropriate action is taken and the school is well supported by other services when necessary.

21. Pupils with special educational needs integrate well with other pupils. They enjoy good relationships with other pupils and staff who help them. All mix well at playtimes. Other pupils show sensitivity and value pupils with special educational needs. They are constantly encouraged by their classmates. For example, when they struggle to answer a question in class, other pupils join their teachers in giving them the time they need to think about the answer.

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

22. The quality of teaching is a strength of the school and a key factor in the good progress pupils make in their time at Grace Mary. It is of a consistently high quality across all subjects. Teaching is of a very high standard in the younger classes particularly. Overall, approximately eight lessons in every ten were good or better, and nearly half were very good or excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection, when one lesson in every ten was unsatisfactory and the proportions of good, very good and excellent teaching were lower. Parents are very positive about the quality of teaching. In the questionnaire responses, all parents agreed that teaching at the school is good. At the meeting held before the inspection parents were equally positive.

23. Teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is very good overall. The high standard reported at the previous inspection, when it was a strength of the school, has been maintained. Planning is very thorough. In the nursery, the teacher's meticulous planning ensures activities are relevant and all staff and volunteers are productively deployed. Resources such as a large puppet in the reception class, are used to attract and keep children's interest, and to make teaching clearer. Assessment is used very carefully to check children have understood. All these factors make a very good contribution to the success of teaching and the good rate of children's learning. Throughout the school, staff work very well together to ensure that children benefit from their combined strengths and pupils' good rate of learning is maintained by the smooth transfer from class-to-class.

24. The teaching of literacy is very good in the younger classes and good overall. Lessons are very carefully planned with clear learning objectives shared with the pupils, so that their learning is more focussed. Teachers use questioning and discussion very effectively to help pupils understand, particularly those who have difficulty reading and writing. Summing-up sessions are generally used effectively. In a good Year 5 lesson, pupils were eager to share their poetry-writing and the teacher used their responses very effectively to reinforce the lesson objectives. Pupils who are beginning readers, or who are finding it difficult to master the skills of reading, are not given sufficient support and guidance from their teachers. Consequently, their progress in these key skills is slower than it might otherwise be.

25. The teaching of numeracy is good. Once again, lessons are very carefully planned to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. Questioning, particularly the use of open-ended questions, is well used to encourage pupils to think through problems and apply what they all

ready know to solving new problems. Pupils are taught key vocabulary very systematically, and teachers have high expectations that pupils will use these specific words in the correct context.

26. Classroom learning assistants are very effective in the support they give individuals and groups. These pupils benefit greatly from this skilled support. Assistants are fully briefed on the lesson's aims and have the opportunity to report back on pupils' progress, so that this information may be used when the next lesson is planned. They have benefited from good training and, for example in their questioning, demonstrate a high level of skill. They have very good relationships with the teachers they support, and excellent rapport with pupils.

27. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good overall, and there is very good commitment by everyone at the school to the inclusion and integration of these pupils. Class teachers plan extremely thoroughly for each pupil's needs and ensure they have a purposeful and productive curriculum. Pupils with statements of educational needs are given very good, carefully targeted additional support from learning support assistants. Parental support, too, has been very good and a number of parent volunteers have undertaken training to enable them to work with pupils on a one-to-one basis to help boost literacy and numeracy.

28. The teaching of pupils for whom English is an additional language is very good. In addition, an ethnic minorities achievement project teacher supports two pupils weekly. She liaises with the classteacher about any matters relating to the child and supplies the school with information about the service.

29. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach is very good. In an excellent Year 2 physical education lesson, the teacher was able to link a very clear explanation to a very good visual demonstration of the tasks involved. The specialist music teacher's knowledge enables instruction and guidance to be very well explained so that pupils understand easier and quicker.

30. Teachers' planning is very effective in enabling pupils to have the right task at the right level of difficulty, and this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. In a very good Year 3 art and design lesson, the pupils' learning benefits enormously from the teacher's meticulous planning of each lesson within a group of lessons. Pupils all know precisely what they are doing, why they are doing it, how it develops from the previous lessons and where it is leading to. They have very positive attitudes to their learning as a result. Very good links are made between subjects. In an excellent Year 2 ICT lesson, the teacher taught a new computer skill whilst pupils extended their understanding of the work of contrasting artists.

31. Teaching methods are generally very effective. In lessons where many pupils may find work difficult, for example where there are high levels of reading and writing, teachers quickly recognise when pupils are struggling. On these occasions, they change the task to give pupils a clearer insight in a different way. For example, in a Year 4 lesson researching Henry VIII the teacher called the pupils together, dressed one in a simple cloak to represent the king, and invited the others to ask questions. The pupils were immediately re-enthused and eager to ask well-considered questions. They went from these few minutes with a clearer idea about

the king and the society in which he lived, and were able to use the information they had gained to improve their research project.

32. Teachers recognise their pupils' needs, and cater for them in the way they organise how tasks will be done. For example, good use is made of visits and visitors to give pupils practical experiences from which to draw upon when working back in the classroom. In a good Year 6 geography lesson the teacher used pupils' recent experiences of a river study very effectively. Artefacts, too, are well used for this purpose and pupils' understanding is extended by their opportunities to see for themselves. All through the school, good use is made of the practical and visual using real activities. This is particularly beneficial to pupils with limited language skills in enabling them to learn about the subject being taught without language being an undue barrier.

33. Management of pupils is very good overall. In a very good Year 1 literacy lesson, good behaviour was praised naturally and this encouraged other pupils to follow suit. In Year 2, the teacher's rapport with the class is excellent and the pupils listen to her every word.

34. Marking is generally very good. It is clear, so pupils know what they have done well and what they need to concentrate upon next. This very thorough marking is then used very effectively to plan what pupils should do next.

35. Homework is used effectively to support learning in school. Nearly all parents who responded to the questionnaire agree that their children get the right amount of homework. At the meeting for parents held before the inspection, parents were equally positive. They stated that the amount of homework builds as pupils become older, and that it matches work in school.

36. Where teaching is satisfactory, but less effective than in most lessons, it is generally because tasks are too teacher-directed, a weakness now largely remedied but first noted at the previous inspection.

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

37. The curriculum provision is good, an improvement since the previous inspection. The school offers a broad range of opportunities for all pupils and promotes pupils' personal and social education. It meets the National Curriculum requirements and closely follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.

38. The curriculum for children under five is good and covers all six areas very effectively. It matches these children's needs very closely and gives good emphasis to developing basic skills. They have the opportunities to settle into school life successfully.

39. The overall curriculum plan for Key Stage 1 and 2 is cohesive and ensures full coverage of all programmes of study for each subject whilst making sure that work is not repeated unnecessarily. In most subjects, the school has adopted the nationally-recognised guidance. Currently plans are being revised to cater for recent national revisions. The school is well on the way to achieving this.

40. The allocation of teaching time to different subjects is generally balanced effectively, although there is little time allocated to science and ICT. It correctly identifies the need to give greater time to the development of language skills and there is good provision for the literacy and numeracy throughout the school.

41. There is a satisfactory policy for sex education approved by the governors, although there is no formal sex education programmes in the school. A policy has not been written for drug education and apart from reference to medicines in science no formal programme has been planned. However, the school is aware of this and plans are in place to remedy it.

42. The school ensures very good equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. In addition to the daily teaching and learning in the classrooms, all pupils are encouraged to take part in extra-curricular and other activities the school may arrange. There is a well-planned arrangement for pupils who are withdrawn from class for extra support so none miss the same lesson twice nor miss the important introductions in literacy and numeracy lessons.

43. The curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The needs of these pupils are quickly and accurately identified. Individual education plans are clear and parents are informed about their children's targets regularly. Targets are appropriate and directly linked to the outcomes of assessment. Class teachers plan meticulously for all of these pupils and this is particularly beneficial to their progress. The school generally identifies pupils with high attainment levels and support is successful in meeting their needs, for example through group-work and attendance at the children's university. However, the special educational needs policy is old and has not been updated to meet the requirements of the 'Code of Practice', which has been in schools for many years. Pupils with special educational needs do not have effective opportunities to learn through the use of ICT, and at present there is little suitable software to support these pupils' learning.

44. There is a very good range of extra curricular opportunities in the breakfast and after school clubs, all of which are well attended. In addition, parents and staff work together to put on other, generally social, events for pupils.

45. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual development is good and is supported by religious education lessons and assemblies. Assemblies are religious in character and the school meets the requirement for an act of collective worship. In many lessons and classes, pupils are given opportunities to experience the wonder of nature, for example when studying plant growth. A very good framework is in place for the moral development of pupils, and lessons and assemblies make a strong contribution. Pupils are taught right from wrong. The behaviour code supports this well. Every opportunity is taken by staff to act as good role models and foster good relationships. Reward assembly recognises the achievements and efforts of individual pupils. The provision for social development is very good. Attention is paid to encouraging social responsibility. Pupils are encouraged to take care of each other and to care for the school environment and equipment. Special collections for charities are a high priority in the school. Social development is very good. The school makes good provision for personal, social and health education. 'Circle time' enables pupils to discuss matters that are important to them and learn to understand that others opinions may be different to their own. They have opportunities to participate in visits and residential visits are particularly beneficial to pupils' social development. Cultural development is good. This is approached successfully through

many subjects including religious education, art and design, music, history and English. Good opportunities are given for pupils to explore a good range of music from around the world, and to understand the historical and art development of their own and other cultures. Artists and weavers and visits to art galleries are used well to give pupils further insight. Good displays of artefacts and clothes worn in other cultures extend this understanding.

46. There are strong links with the community established through a good number of visitors talking to the pupils about a wide range of subjects ranging from healthy eating to soccer. Pupils also entertain senior citizens and regularly participate in local community events. There are very good links with secondary schools and pupils make regular visits, for example to take part in musical events. The school has an effective teacher training partnership with a local college.

47. Nearly all parents who returned the questionnaire agree that the school offers a good range of activities outside of lessons. Parents at the meeting held before the inspection confirmed this view. A curriculum newsletter for each age phase is sent to parents to inform them what the pupils are doing in school each term. This is much appreciated by parents who are then able to support their children's learning better. The school does not use this positive support so effectively with young and beginner readers, however.

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

48. The school has very good arrangements for the care of its pupils and the positive position reported at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. Pupils are all well known and well supported by the very good relationships that exist throughout the school. Health and safety procedures are very good. There is a suitable policy which the school has identified for review. The governing body is closely involved in site and risk assessments. These are very thorough and any necessary action is taken promptly. This contributes well to the school environment which is well maintained and attractive. Pupils are well supervised and this is especially so at lunchtimes when the very good organisation of lunch and playtimes promotes an orderly and happy atmosphere. The arrangements for child protection are also very good. There is an appropriate policy that provides good guidance for all staff and there is a good level of awareness amongst all adults in school. Statutory requirements are met in full. Overall, this has a very positive effect upon how well pupils do in the school.

49. The procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic and personal progress are satisfactory. A variety of tests and assessments provide the information to be included in a comprehensive recording system. This system is at a very early stage and its success is yet to be proven. The system is used consistently across all the curriculum subjects with greater detail included in English and mathematics. Information gained is well used to set targets for groups of pupils but the provision of individual targets has yet to be fully developed. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate the success of their work in lessons and at the end of each school year to record a self-assessment. The use of assessment information to inform the planning of the curriculum is good overall. The results of tests and assessments are analysed carefully and the information gleaned used effectively when planning school improvement.

50. The school is fully committed to the inclusion and integration of pupils with special educational needs in all school activities, and this is very beneficial to the progress these

pupils make in all aspects of school life. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are well supported in line with the requirements of their statement of need. All other pupils on the special needs register are given support in literacy and numeracy by their class teachers and the learning support assistants. Pastoral care is a high priority within the school and its success can be observed in the confident way these pupils become happy members of the school community.

51. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. There is an effective system of rewards and clear rules that are well understood by all. The emphasis placed upon praise is very effective in promoting good behaviour in lessons and in boosting self-confidence and pride in all pupils. Teachers provide clear messages about any unacceptable behaviour. There are good procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. This area is very well supported by the very good arrangements at lunchtime and by the role that Year 6 pupils take in acting as ‘buddies’ to pupils who have any worries.

52. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. The school meets with statutory requirements and the administrative arrangements are efficient. Attendance is closely monitored and swift action taken to investigate absences.

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

53. The parent’s views of the school are very positive. Parents are appreciative of the good education provided for their children. They are especially pleased with the behaviour in school and the very good relationships that exist. They feel that the headteacher and all the staff are very approachable and helpful and that the school presents itself as a close and supportive team. The inspection findings support the positive views of parents.

54. The effectiveness of the school’s links with parents is very good. There is a close relationship between the school and the parents. They are welcomed into school and nursery at the start and finish of each day. Parents feel the school is responsive and deals with any concerns quickly and effectively. There are good opportunities for parents to take part in school life and to be effective partners in their children’s education. They are invited to popular weekly assemblies and various special events and performances.

55. The impact of parents’ involvement on the work of the school is good. A number of parents are able to offer to help in the classrooms and nursery. A strong feature of the school is the support parents offer to the after school and breakfast clubs and to the ‘Enable’ group which in particular has a very beneficial effect upon the learning of those pupils involved. The parent-school association is well supported and holds a variety of fund raising and social events for both pupils and parents. Funds raised provide the school with much appreciated additional resources.

56. The quality of the information provided for parents is very good. The school brochure, governors’ report and newsletters are well written and keep parents well informed about the life of the school. Nursery parents are also well informed and receive good guidance on how to support their children at home. Information about pupil’s work and progress is conveyed in good quality written reports and with regular consultation events. Written reports offer good information about the work that pupils have done. Areas of difficulty and targets for

improvement are clearly identified. Information about the curriculum and the work that pupils will be doing is good. Booklets about different aspects of the curriculum and topic information are provided regularly in each year group and the nursery.

57. The contribution that parents make to their children's learning at home and at school is good. Homework is well supported and this has a beneficial effect upon pupils' learning. The close relationship between parents and the teachers has a positive effect on the effectiveness of the homework provision. The home/school agreement has been very well supported, indicating parent's commitment to supporting their children's education. Although parents read at home with their children, the school chooses not to send books home that pupils are learning from in school. Particularly where pupils are beginner readers, this is detrimental to their progress.



58. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept informed if there is cause for concern in their child's learning and kept up to date about their progress. Any concerns the parent may have relating to their child's development are investigated and parents have access to the class teacher to discuss any matters they wish to raise. Although parents are able to see their child's individual educational plan at parents' evenings, and discuss progress at annual reviews, the special needs co-ordinator has not been able to find a suitable system to make contact with parents.

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

59. The headteacher, with the support of staff and governors, gives the school a very clear educational direction which has been largely responsible for the steady improvement in standards since the previous inspection, and the school's much improved status in the local community. Other than one or two who did not express a view, every parent who responded to the questionnaire agrees that the school is well led and managed.

60. The improved quality of education under the then new headteacher, reported at the previous inspection, has been successfully and effectively built upon. Teamwork is very strong, as is the commitment to improvement. The school has made satisfactory improvement overall since the previous inspection. In most areas directly to do with the curriculum and standards, good improvements have been made. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning are still insufficient, and this inevitably impacts upon the curriculum provided and consequently standards achieved. The school has done everything reasonably possible to improve the library facilities, but they remain inadequate.

61. The governing body is effective in fulfilling its responsibilities. Governors have a clear understanding of the relative strengths and areas for development in the school, and they use this information when participating in discussions to shape the school's direction. The curriculum reports they receive from subject co-ordinators are beneficial to their knowledge and understanding of what is working well and what needs to be improved, although these reports are general and rarely based on precise, firsthand experience. They are supportive of the school, whilst still questioning policies. Statutory responsibilities are fulfilled successfully.

62. More rigorous monitoring was a key issue of the previous inspection. Although this is much improved in areas such as tracking pupils' progress, little is done to monitor teaching and learning directly. Furthermore, what is done is largely informal with no structured approach to agreed criteria and with no formal feedback. The implementation of the school's performance management policy will rectify part of this weakness. In English and mathematics, subject co-ordinators have had some limited opportunities to monitor their subjects directly, and this has been beneficial in identifying strengths to build on and weaknesses to be eradicated. This is particularly true of elements of the literacy hour and numeracy lesson, although more remains to be done. Plans exist for this to be extended, but currently other subject co-ordinators do not have these opportunities and consequently their effectiveness is reduced. Although the headteacher monitors planning, and one or two subject co-ordinators look at the work pupils do, very few have any knowledge of what is happening in class. Without this information they are not able to fully monitor their subjects and support their colleagues.

63. Financial planning is very good overall and spending is regularly monitored, an improvement since the previous inspection. Senior staff and governors receive accurate, up-to-the-minute information in an easy-to-understand format. Resources available to the school are generally well used. Governors are aware of the principles of best value and these are applied to some aspects of their work.

64. The special educational needs co-ordinator has ensured a satisfactory provision is in place for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers are given support to fill in their pupils' individual educational plans, staff are deployed efficiently and annual reviews are organised satisfactorily.

65. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is used for that purpose overall, but better use could be made of the special educational needs co-ordinator's time. Although money is very well used to provide well trained and effective nursery nurses and classroom learning assistants, the school does not always use the expertise and experience of the special educational needs co-ordinator well. Her time is largely used on clerical and administrative tasks, and very little on supporting and monitoring these pupils directly. For example, during the inspection week the co-ordinator was not timetabled to be with any of these pupils, their teachers or support staff. Consequently she has a largely second-hand knowledge of what is working and what needs improvement. Furthermore, meetings between the co-ordinator and the special educational governor are only informal and this is not beneficial to the systematic development of the provision.

66. Day-to-day administration is very efficient and effective. It does much to enable the headteacher and teaching staff to concentrate on more appropriate matters. Parents and visitors are given a warm and welcoming first impression of the school.

67. The school has a good number of appropriately qualified teachers who work very closely with the very good number of classroom learning assistants. It is unusual for a school of this size to have a non-class based deputy headteacher, and better use could be made of her time. Arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning, and supporting subject co-ordinators, are particularly ineffective. Induction procedures are good and the school works in close partnership with a teacher training institution, to the benefit of teachers' expertise and pupils' learning. Of particular benefit to pupils' learning is the good quality of training that staff undertake.

68. Accommodation is good overall. Classroom accommodation is adequate and teachers use very colourful, often informative displays to create a stimulating and attractive environment. The school grounds are good and appropriate plans exist to use them more. The toilets have been improved since the previous inspection, but the library is still inadequate. This has an adverse effect upon pupils' learning. Although plans exist to improve facilities for ICT, currently it is difficult for teachers to teach skills efficiently. Otherwise, resources are sufficient overall with one or two gaps, such as in geography, highlighted by the revised curriculum.

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

69. To continue to build on the steady progress made over the last few years, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Raise standards in English by:
  - giving pupils more opportunities to speak, particularly in formal situations
  - teaching reading more systematically;
  - involving parents more closely in the practising of reading begun in school
  - build on current initiatives and plans to further improve writing;
  - continue to explore ways to improve the library accommodation.(Paragraphs: 1-3, 6, 13, 24, 47, 57, 68, 79, 81, 83-86, 89, 90, 137, 165, 166)
  
- (2) Enable subject co-ordinators to have the firsthand information they need to raise standards in their subjects further by giving them regular opportunities to monitor learning directly, to better develop their subjects and offer support to their colleagues.  
(Paragraphs: 60, 62, 67, 94, 98, 116, 120, 127, 133, 148, 162)
  
- (3) Make more effective and efficient use of the deputy headteacher/special educational needs co-ordinator's time by:
  - reducing the time spent on clerical and administrative aspects;
  - increasing the time spent regularly supporting these pupils, monitoring their curriculum provision, and guiding teachers and classroom support assistants;(Paragraphs: 58, 63, 65, 68, 76)

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

- Put into place current plans for ICT to give more teaching time, better equipment and a specialist facility so that teaching may be more efficient, pupils' skills may improve and the subject may be used better to support work in other subjects.  
(Paragraphs: 11, 40, 43, 68, 102, 114, 115, 142, 143, 145, 147, 156)
- Give more teaching time to science in Key Stage 2.  
(Paragraphs: 40, 115)
- Produce a policy, ratified by governors, on mis-use of drugs.  
(Paragraph: 41)

## **ENHANCED LEARNING PROVISION**

70. Pupils who are part of the 'Enhanced Learning Provision' make good progress generally and enjoy a full, rich and relevant curriculum. Largely due to the very good quality support from teaching and support staff, and the care the school takes over all its pupils-including these-the Provision provides a very good education for them.

71. There is very strong commitment by everyone at the school to the inclusion and integration of these pupils into main stream classes. This is beneficial to these pupils in particular, and to the social development of pupils generally. They learn tolerance and

acceptance within the very positive school ethos. The school is allocated funding for 'Enhanced Learning Provision', for eight pupils with statements of special educational need. The school places these pupils in main stream classes with nursery nurses or classroom support assistants allocated with them.

72. All pupils work well together. Other pupils are supportive and encouraging, and very patient when, for example, these pupils need a little longer to work out the answer. There is a very positive and harmonious atmosphere in classes and around the school generally.

73. The teaching of these pupils is very good overall. Teachers are very skilled at matching tasks to their abilities and handling the small number with behavioural needs.

74. The skilled special needs support assistants give these pupils very good additional support. They themselves receive guidance and advice from outside agencies. For example, the speech therapy service and advisory and support teachers visits regularly to offer advice on effective support. The school provides a very good level of support at lunchtimes and playtimes, so that all pupils enjoy these more relaxed and social times.

75. Planning for these pupils' needs is very good and the relevance of the curriculum is a significant factor in how successful and contented they are in class. However, class teachers very often have to resort to developing specific programmes and resources themselves to ensure that these pupils have the curriculum they need to make sufficient progress, and receive little support from elsewhere in the school.

76. Funds allocated to the Provision are generally used appropriately, for example, to fund the very high quality special needs support assistants. Some is used to fund part of the special educational needs co-ordinator's salary. This teacher also serves as the deputy headteacher and there is no clear system by which the school can account for the time spent on each role. This is a weakness. The school should ensure that the co-ordinator has more of a regular and direct role in monitoring the teaching and learning of these pupils and the progress they are making.

## 77. PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12	36	34	18	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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	19	211
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	83

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	72

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	4.3

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.3

*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	16	14	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	14
	Girls	9	11	13
	Total	21	23	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70 (65)	77 (65)	90 (84)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	10	13	10
	Total	24	27	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (68)	90 (84)	80 (81)
	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	19	15	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	14	18
	Girls	8	9	13
	Total	19	23	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56 (60)	68 (57)	91 (63)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	15	16
	Girls	8	9	10
	Total	20	24	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (60)	71 (53)	79 (57)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	197
Any other minority ethnic group	11

*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	0	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)	9.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.3
Average class size	30

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

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	238.75

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	521 612
Total expenditure	512 309
Expenditure per pupil	2 220
Balance brought forward from previous year	32 734
Balance carried forward to next year	42 037



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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	240
Number of questionnaires returned	46

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	22	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	74	26	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	70	28	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	52	43	0	2	2
The teaching is good.	63	35	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	35	8	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	13	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	20	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	68	22	4	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	63	30	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	66	30	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	61	28	2	0	9

## **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**

78. At the time of the previous inspection the provision for children under five was judged to be a strength of the school and this high standard has been maintained. Children are admitted to the nursery shortly after their third birthday on a part-time basis and transfer to the full-time reception class in the September of the year in which they become five. These two classes make up the foundation stage of schooling. The majority of children start in the nursery with skills well below those expected nationally, especially in the areas of communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. They have a very good start to their education but are still well below the expected standard when they transfer to the reception class. This is confirmed by assessments done soon after admission. In both classes, the planned curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to their needs. Children with special educational needs are identified quickly and fully integrated into both classes where they make progress at the same rate as other children. Induction procedures are good and allow parents, children and staff to get to know each other before admission and before transfer to reception class. This enables all children to settle quickly into nursery and move class with confidence. Further good progress is made in the reception class. The effectiveness of the foundation stage is due to very good teaching, an appropriate curriculum and good resources. Effective assessment procedures are implemented thoroughly so that staff know what children are achieving and can match their next steps in learning to their current level of attainment. Staff in both classes work very well as a team and are very good role models. They plan children's activities and experiences carefully so that progress continues smoothly between the nursery and reception class. Parents appreciate the care and expertise of the dedicated, hardworking staff and are kept well in touch with their children's progress.

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

79. Children make good progress in this area, but remain below average. They achieve security by the well-established routines and enjoy coming to school. All children are encouraged to behave considerately and to try their best. They respond well to these high expectations and the good opportunities they are given so that they become more confident that they can succeed. Staff allow children opportunities to resolve minor difficulties between themselves, watching closely and intervening quietly to help if necessary. Children gradually become more independent. They register their arrival in the nursery by selecting their name card. In the nursery, they generally undress and dress for physical development by themselves. They learn to take turns and share fairly, choosing and organising some of their activities independently. Staff plan their teaching carefully so that children are kept happily busy with activities well matched to their needs and this plays an important part in the consistently good behaviour. All adults are deeply caring and show respect and courtesy towards each other and the children. This promotes good social development in class and situations such as snack time in the nursery and playtimes and lunchtimes in reception class. Children are always expected to clear away their things carefully for the next ones to use. The very good quality of teaching enables children to develop personally, socially and emotionally within a safe, secure and attractive learning environment.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

80. The vast majority of children enter the nursery with very limited language skills and use mainly one or two words or short phrases in answer to questions. Most cannot yet explain their feelings or describe clearly what they are doing. Pupils' talking improves by the time they enter the reception class but many children still find it difficult to sustain a short conversation with an adult. Adults in the foundation stage encourage language development, taking care in the words they use, ensuring that children understand but also introducing new words to expand the children's limited vocabulary. All through the foundation stage, talk is encouraged by the very good provision for role-play situations such as a veterinary surgery in the nursery and the 'Grace Mary Bakery' in reception. Puppets are used effectively in the nursery to encourage shy children to talk through an animal glove puppet in "The Jungle" area. Soft toys are available in reception class for children to cuddle when looking at books. Children are introduced to the early skills of reading in enjoyable and appropriate ways. Comfortable reading areas encourage children to look at books and learn to see reading as pleasurable. Appropriate games and activities at school are extended to home use by the excellent 'Home Learning Packs' which are very well prepared and maintained in the nursery for parents to use with their children. The packs are highly appreciated by parents and children derive much pleasure and benefit from language games to play at home. Good opportunities are provided for children to "write" for themselves, making marks on paper which develop slowly into letter-like shapes, then letters and words. In the foundation stage, children can trace over letters and carefully begin to copy the adult's writing. The quality of teaching in this area is very good and children make rapid progress. Nonetheless, by the end of the foundation stage many children do not achieve the 'early learning goals' because of their disadvantaged starting point in language.

## **Mathematical development**

81. In the mathematical area of learning very good teaching is enabling children to achieve well in counting forwards and backwards to 10, recognising numbers and understanding number rhymes. Children develop simple mathematical language to describe comparisons in size, for example when nursery children assemble cardboard snakes and compare their length. Reception children learn about repeating patterns and make iced biscuits decorated with small sweets in two or three colours, either planning their pattern first or recording it afterwards to reinforce their learning. There is a good range of mathematical toys and equipment to help develop children's understanding of shape, measurement, capacity, weight, time and money. In the nursery, learning is reinforced well by the mathematical games in the 'Home Learning Packs'. The varied experiences and high quality teaching are leading children towards the 'early learning goals' in this area but they are not all achieved by the end of the foundation stage because children's weakness in language hampers their ability to discuss and develop mathematical ideas and methods to solve practical problems.

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

82. The teaching in this area is very good. Children benefit from a wide range of planned activities to help them understand the world and the different roles of people within it. They make a good start on early geography skills by exploring the layout of the school, its grounds and immediate locality. The reception children go for a walk to Holy Cross Church.

Classrooms are equipped with miniature world toys, train tracks and playmats to enable children to re-create their explorations through play. Both classes can extend their mapping and tracking skills outdoors by riding wheeled toys over curved or straight lines painted onto the hard surface in the dedicated play area. An early sense of history is developed by learning about themselves and their families. Children look carefully at photographs and begin to recognise changes over time. The reception class extend their topic on "Beautiful Babies" to the compilation of family trees, complete with photographs to make an excellent chronological record. Technological skills are fostered effectively through a good range of construction toys, planned activities and daily access to up-to-date computers. The large equipment in the nursery "Building Area" is well supported by teaching and learning cards which give children a guide about what structures they can build. There is excellent provision in the outside play area. Attractive willow bowers were made by visiting craftsmen from the Black Country Groundwork team. Watching these workers, and weavers from the Birmingham Weavers' Guild, introduces children to the creative and constructive use of materials. The good range of experiences enables many children to reach some of the 'early learning goals' in this area by the end of their reception year. They are less successful with the language-based goals such as asking questions about why things happen and how things work because of their limited language skills.

### **Physical development**

83. On entry to nursery, many children have poor hand-to-eye co-ordination. They make sound progress in their dexterity and their fine movement skills gradually improve by carefully-planned activities using a variety of tools and implements. Children throughout the foundation stage draw, paint, cut out and apply glue in their activities with care. The important skills of running, jumping, climbing, balancing and swinging are partially provided for by access to the physical education apparatus in the school hall during the Autumn term. However, plans to install a safety surface in part of the outside play area are well advanced and physical skills of control and co-ordination should be improved by the more regular use of portable climbing equipment. The implementation of these measures is necessary to remedy the weakness identified in the previous inspection report which is still unresolved. Children in the foundation stage are on target to reach the expected standard in their physical development, except for the use of balancing and climbing equipment for travelling around, under, over and through.

### **Creative development**

84. Children make good progress in their creative development, although they begin at a very low starting point. Their paintings at first show immaturity and little discernible form but drawings and paintings show increasing skill at a good rate as children move through the nursery and reception classes. Many children learn to colour in carefully between an outline. A wide range of art and craftwork is displayed with flair and expertise to create a warm, attractive environment which enhances learning and raises standards by its influence and example. Art activities include painting, collage, modelling and pattern making. In the nursery, children have achieved good standards in observational paintings of a plant which make a vibrant display. In singing and moving to music, children listen carefully, begin to recognise words and tunes and sing with actions. They play very happily in the role-play areas which are enhanced by good quality dressing-up clothes, but most lack the ability to play an imaginative part. By the end of the foundation stage, most children achieve some of the 'early

learning goals' in this area but their attainment in creative play is below the level expected and is restricted by their inability to communicate and express ideas and feelings in imaginative ways. This has an adverse effect upon their learning.

## ENGLISH

85. The proportion of pupils reaching the level expected of eleven-year-olds in the 2000 national tests was well below the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching a higher level was also well below the national average. When results are compared with those of pupils from similar schools, they are below average, rather than well below. When results pupils achieve at age eleven are compared with the results they achieved at age seven, progress is slightly better than average, but not as good as in mathematics. Over time, girls do a little better than boys. There has been a gradual improvement in attainment over the recent past, although results in 2000 dipped and the school failed to meet its target.

86. The proportion of pupils reaching the level expected of seven-year-olds in the 2000 national tests was well below the national average in both reading and writing. The proportion of pupils who reached a higher level was also well below the national average. When results are compared with those of pupils from similar schools, they are average in writing and below average, rather than well below, in reading. Results in writing have improved considerably over the last two years, whilst those in reading have improved but remained below the average. Over time, boys and girls have reached similar levels.

87. Pupils start school with language and literacy skills which are well below those expected. They make good progress in listening, satisfactory and increasing progress in writing, but progress in speaking and reading skills remains slow.

88. The attainment of pupils with special educational needs is good in comparison with how they have done previously. These pupils benefit greatly from the very good support they receive from class teachers and learning support assistants. Despite the high proportions of pupils with special educational needs in many classes, work is very carefully matched to each pupil's ability and time in lessons is used very productively. Pupils' very positive attitudes, too, contributes to the purposeful atmosphere.

89. The attainment of pupils for whom English is an additional language is good. Tasks and activities are carefully matched to each pupils needs, and this is very beneficial to the good progress they make. The quality of support they are given, by school staff and outside agencies, is good, particularly the use of discussion and conversation.

90. By the end of both key stages, attainment in speaking is below the level expected for their age while attainment in listening is broadly in line with the level expected. In all classes, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and other adults who help them. In their answers, they demonstrate that they have generally understood. Most pupils can answer questions and voice their opinions when asked, although many speak in simple sentences. They are at ease when talking to each other and to visitors. The school's introduction of brief 'paired chats' is having a positive effect in enabling pupils to quickly marshal their thoughts and be able to voice their answers. However, the majority of eleven-year-old pupils still lack fluency and confidence in exploring ideas, communicating effectively, questioning and arguing rationally. Most, but not all, are aware of Standard English and when to use it. Their limited proficiency when talking restricts their playing a full part in discussions, adapting what they say to different purposes or in using varied vocabulary. Most younger pupils make good progress in their speaking skills, largely because of the good opportunities they are given through informal role-play. Puppets are widely available for shy pupils who need to speak through

an intermediary. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to speak out aloud in 'circle time' and this is beneficial to their progress. In Key Stage 2, some good opportunities are also of benefit, such as when Year 5 and 6 pupils gained in confidence through their participation in dramatic performance on a recent residential visit. Generally, however, there is insufficient teaching of the more formal speaking skills such as debate or oral presentation.

91. By the end of both key stages, attainment in reading is below average and this weakness affects how well pupils achieve in all academic subjects. In Key Stage 1, pupils follow a structured reading programme which includes good emphasis on the teaching of phonics. This enables pupils to make an early start in reading simple books from a suitably graded scheme. However, pupils do not take home the same books they are using at school. The ones they can choose to take home have different vocabulary and do not give practice in what they are learning in lessons so that many pupils are confused and find reading difficult. This inhibits progress. Although the school trains parent volunteers and learning support assistants in hearing children read and this gives valuable support, the expertise of the qualified teachers is used insufficiently in guiding young pupils in their reading skills. In Key Stage 2, pupils are not sure enough at first of the strategies they need in order to read fluently and independently. As these skills develop pupils begin to acquire knowledge of different authors and their styles of writing. There are sufficient books available, including poetry, but the central library is too small for browsing or research and this is unsatisfactory. All pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught information retrieval skills and understand the book classification system used but the inadequate library provision has a negative effect on pupils' learning especially in personal study and independent research. Many pupils are supported in their reading at home and parental interest encourages success. However, many pupils do not read frequently or widely enough to become avid readers and do not sufficiently develop skills of inference, deduction and comprehension which would raise their attainment levels, particularly in tests.

92. In their schoolwork, pupils' attainment in writing is of average standard and good progress has been made since the previous inspection. There has been a determined emphasis on writing skills and presentation in both key stages, which has had a positive effect on standards. In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress through a structured approach to handwriting and the standards reached in their writing books are now maintained in their other work. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils can write independently although some still have difficulties and are unable to write in an extended form. They are given suitable opportunities to write for varied purposes and their developing language skills are used satisfactorily in other subjects across the curriculum. Pupils learn to plan and re-draft their work satisfactorily and their word-processing experience in ICT sharpens this skill.

93. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall, and of particularly high standard in Key Stage 1. No unsatisfactory teaching or learning was observed during the inspection. Lessons are well planned and organised. Teachers have good subject knowledge and their learning objectives are clearly stated in their plans and shared with pupils. In almost all lessons, work is well matched to the needs of pupils at different ability levels. Teachers adopt a brisk pace and use a variety of strategies to attract and maintain pupils' interest and concentration. In the best lessons, teachers show a high level of expectation of pupils' work and behaviour, and pupils respond to meet them. Teachers do not, for example, accept one word answers or overlook careless spelling or untidy writing. The quality of marking of written work is good. Comments are usually used to give pupils guidance on how to improve

and often refer to pupils' current targets for learning. Classrooms all provide attractive and rich literary environments which encourage the learning of language. Pupils' written work, including poetry, is well displayed all over the school, inviting pupils to read it; this raises individual and collective self-esteem. Through good support, pupils with special educational needs achieve comparatively good standards in lessons, but many are at an early stage of language acquisition. Consequently, they are not able to reach the same standards when working independently. The low level of language skills exhibited by many pupils generally affects their capacity to learn. Teachers are skilled at encouraging pupils to concentrate and persevere but when working without this support pupils quickly lose their self-confidence and do not show their learning to advantage.

94. The curriculum is good, particularly in providing a high level of continuity and progression. The 'National Literacy Strategy' has been implemented effectively. Assessment procedures are good and used effectively when planning and setting targets for future developments. The school carefully links homework to work in school to reinforce teaching and learning and parents mainly ensure that the homework set is done. The school analyses test results to set school targets and tracks pupils' progress against the targets set.

95. Co-ordination is good and leadership of the subject effective within the current constraints. Useful advice and guidance with teachers' planning is given. However, the monitoring of pupils' work all through the school to check standards is not rigorous enough. The co-ordinator is given little time to carry out this function, so that the whole picture of school progression and the information necessary to recognise where the school is effective and where future improvements are needed is incomplete.

## **MATHEMATICS**

96. The proportion of pupils reaching the level expected of eleven-year-olds in the 2000 national tests was below the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching a higher level was also below the national average. When results are compared with those of pupils from similar schools, they are above average. When results pupils achieve at age eleven are compared with the results they achieved at age seven, most have achieved better progress than is expected. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. There has been a gradual improvement in attainment over the recent past.

97. The proportion of pupils reaching the level expected of seven-year-olds in the 2000 national tests was below the national average. The proportion of pupils who reached a higher level was also below the national average. When results are compared with those of pupils from similar schools, they are above average. Again, there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

98. Standards of attainment seen during the inspection indicate that the majority of eleven-year-old and seven-year-old pupils are working at the level expected of pupils of their age. This represents an improvement on standards in the most recent tests, and is largely because of the very good support all pupils receive in their lessons. When working independently, pupils' standards are a little lower and more consistent with test results.

99. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good when compared with the targets set in their individual education plans. This is largely due to the very good



support given to these pupils, both by class teachers and learning support assistants. The rapport between pupils and staff is very positive and this also contributes to their good achievement as no time is lost and there is a very good climate for learning. When classroom learning assistants teach an activity they are fully familiar with the lesson plan, what is to be taught, and why. They are well trained and have good opportunities to tell teachers about particular successes or where more practise is needed. Consequently, their time is well used and they achieve much with their pupils. Good use is made of aides and visual cues to support these pupils' understanding. Teachers plan very carefully so that tasks are well matched to the differing abilities in their classes. Pupils are regularly withdrawn from lessons for a few minutes of individual support. This is generally organised so that pupils do not miss the same lesson regularly. Even so, where pupils are taken out of the teaching activities, their understanding is often adversely affected because the class has moved on so much by the time they return. The school does not monitor this closely enough. More able pupils are identified and those in Year 6 are given a little good quality focused teaching to extend their understanding and abilities to use and apply number and algebra effectively.

100. Pupils for whom English is an additional language also do well. Limited English understanding is not allowed to restrict their mathematical development, and the good quality support they are given enables them to make good progress.

101. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can generally use number successfully. They can multiply and divide accurately, many by two digits. These pupils can also multiply and divide to two decimal places. Some can use brackets within statements. Some pupils know and use accurately 'mean', 'median', 'mode' and 'range'. Most pupils make a good attempt at word problems, although few use inverse calculation as a natural tool for checking answers. The most able pupils can calculate the weight of a calculator from an algebraic equation. They know how to solve problems more efficiently by looking for ways to reduce the number of calculations they perform. These pupils organise their work well, and demonstrate a thoughtful approach to problem-solving.

102. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can group in tens and identify multiples of ten and five, a few to one thousand. The most able recognise 'zero' is a place-holder. They use standard units to measure, can find a half or a quarter, and know common regular shapes. The more able can find the number of faces, edges, sides and corners of these shapes. They collect information in tables, lists and tally charts some of which they then convert to graphs.

103. Numeracy is well used in other subjects. In science, pupils measure and calculate. In geography, older pupils regularly use graphs to represent temperature, rainfall or population data. Very little use is made of ICT to handle and analysis this information, however.

104. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers use lots of 'why' questions, particularly with older and more able pupils, to extend their thinking and challenge them further. Tasks, too, are well planned to provoke pupils to think and to enable the lesson to build step-by-step. The level of each task is carefully matched to pupils' abilities, so that a particularly able pupil in Year 6 for example is involved in the class lesson at appropriate times and works on the computer at others. Examples used to illustrate teaching points are relevant to pupils' own lives, consequently; their understanding is better. In most classes, particularly in the oral parts of lessons, pupils have very positive attitudes, they are keen and inquisitive and contribute to the good pace of these sessions. Marking generally gives pupils a

clear understanding of what has been achieved. It is particularly good in Year 2 where it is both precise and clear in the feedback pupils are given.

105. Speaking and listening skills are practised well, particularly when teachers ask pupils to discuss a particular point. When pupils' responses are slow, for example in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher gives the pupils a short time to discuss it in pairs. As a result, there is much more dialogue and thirty seconds later the teacher has far more volunteers to answer.

106. The three-part lesson is used effectively. Mental starters are quick, well focussed and generally reinforce or extend other learning well. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when mental skills were a key issue. The school made a good start to this before the national initiative was introduced, and staff training, particularly in 'short burst activities', had already led to improvement. The lesson and week's objectives are clearly explained and key vocabulary taught and explained. Plenaries are used appropriately, although some are rushed because earlier parts of the lesson overrun.

107. The curriculum is very effective and well-planned. Assessment is used well, particularly to track pupils' progress and to check understanding. Where necessary, this then leads to additional tasks being planned.

108. Good management ensures that teachers have all they need, for example in training and resources. The co-ordinator has monitored mental mathematics sessions, and found this useful in planning training. It is expected that plenary sessions will be the next focus for evaluation. The school has responded to the concerns expressed in the previous inspection report very well. Good and imaginative activities now take place. For example, a very well organised and planned after-school club concentrates on improving number skills through mental mathematics, while the school works closely with parents to support pupils' learning through daily individual sessions to build confidence and understanding. Future plans include a lending library of mathematics games.

## **SCIENCE**

109. The proportion of pupils reaching the level expected for eleven-year-olds in the 2000 national tests was above the national average, both at the expected level and well above at the higher level. When results are compared with those of pupils from similar schools, attainment is high. The proportion of pupils reaching the level expected for seven-year-olds in the 2000 assessments undertaken by their teachers, was in line with the national average, whilst the proportion reaching the higher levels was below national averages. In the results of both eleven and seven-year-olds, this represents an improvement since the previous inspection and a continual, good improvement over time.

110. Standards of attainment seen during the inspection indicates that the majority of eleven-year-olds are working at the level expected for their age, with an appropriate number of these pupils working at higher levels. Given the low attainment on entry, pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress, in experimental and investigative science particularly, and most reach the level expected by this age.

111. Pupils study all strands of the National Curriculum and a particular strength is the work undertaken on investigations. Throughout the school, pupils make predictions, devise fair tests and undertake experiments before drawing conclusions. Pupils take a pride in presenting their work well and this consists of a written record of the investigation with diagrams, tables, charts and a variety of graphs. Although pupils use the internet successfully for research, a particular weakness is in the use of computer-generated tables and graphs. The displays around the school are very effective and demonstrate the wide range of good quality of work of pupils throughout the school. For example, younger pupils were thinking about night and day light sources, investigating our needs to stay alive, taking part in a celery experiment, testing the amount of water that travels up the celery and observing the growth of

plants. Other displays refer to experiments pupils have undertaken on dissolving, filtration, gases, insulation and conduction. These displays clearly demonstrate the consistency and development of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in science as they move through the school. In addition, there is a good development of the vocabulary associated with science, and numeracy skills are used very effectively in measure and handling data. Throughout the school, the needs of pupils with special educational needs are met successfully, largely because work is very practical and relevant. Class teachers plan very carefully and ensure that the specific needs of all pupils are met. These pupils make good progress. The emphasis on practical and investigative work is also beneficial to the progress of the larger proportion of pupils who have limited language skills, particularly in reading and writing.

112. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is satisfactory. Pupils are beginning to understand the complex feeding relationships between animals and plants in a habitat. They know that different plants and animals are found in different habitats, and that they are suited to that environment.

113. By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is satisfactory. Pupils identify body parts and use the appropriate language to describe them. They predict what light sources they think they will see in school, test these predictions and write up their results accompanied with illustrations. Pupils sort materials and distinguish between those that are natural and those man-made. They understand that the shape of some materials can be changed by bending, twisting, stretching and squashing, and how some foods change through heating and cooling. Pupils understand and can explain a fair test.

114. Literacy is used satisfactorily when pupils make notes and write about their experiments. Numeracy is used well through a good range of tasks. Pupils throughout the school accurately perform a number of measurements of length, time and quantity. Older pupils extend these skills further by designing and creating tables and graphs to support their results.

115. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching is most effective where lessons are well planned, delivered at a brisk pace with high expectations, challenging tasks combined with appropriate assessment and record keeping. Teachers throughout the school have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject, have good relationships with pupils and generally manage their classes well. There are particularly high expectations in Key Stage 1 and early Key Stage 2. The development of pupils' independence in their own learning by the end of Key Stage 2 is hampered by too much teacher directed work, including resources chosen by the teacher, and limited ICT opportunities.

116. The curriculum is good, particularly its emphasis on 'learning through doing'. The scheme of work has been adjusted to fit national guidance for the teaching and learning in science, ensuring consistency and progression alongside effective ongoing assessment. Visits are used very successfully to enrich the curriculum, and there is a wide range. For example, visits have been made to a hands-on science park and to Jodrell Bank, a butterfly farm and Sandwell valley. While resources are generally adequate, more are needed to meet some requirements of the revised scheme of work and to use ICT appropriately. Furthermore, the time allocated to the teaching of science in Key Stage 2 is inadequate.

117. The subject is managed well and the subject action plan appropriate. Imaginative plans include the intention to have a science fair in the school. Pupils' work is sampled and test results monitored. The results of the monitoring, such as the need to work on scientific vocabulary to support pupils understanding of the questions in the standard attainment tests, is used effectively to modify teaching and learning. Teachers benefit from working

alongside the co-ordinator, and from the advice that follows observations. However, too little time is made available for this to be effective throughout the school.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

118. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection when standards were satisfactory and there were some weaknesses. Standards at the ends of both key stages are now above average and weaknesses have been remedied. Display is a strength of the school and art and design contributes significantly to this, both as a subject in its own right and as a support for most other curriculum subjects. Teaching is good throughout the school. All strands of the subject are fully in place and art and design has a strong place in the curriculum.

119. In both key stages, pupils experience a wide range of creative opportunities. They study the work of great artists such as Kandinsky, Monet and Van Gogh. They have many opportunities to use different media when they are creating their own works of art in two or three dimensions. A Year 1 class studying sculptures successfully created three-dimensional pictures of a favourite place using natural materials. Their concentration was very good and behaviour was exemplary because pupils were fully engrossed in their work. Pupils designed their own collages, readily making informed choices to represent landscapes in different colours, shades and textures. In Year 3, pupils are studying chairs, designing and making a chair for a specific purpose. They understand fitness of purpose and can make improvements after evaluating their work. Older pupils extend and refine their techniques and these pupils reach excellent or very good standards in drawing or painting still life compositions of objects with special meanings. Very effective drawings are done in black ink on white paper which are then pasted together to give a cohesive and attractive effect. Three-dimensional work and textiles features in both key stages with exemplary work in weaving done in Year 4 in conjunction with Birmingham Weavers' Guild.

120. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was good overall with some very good teaching in both key stages. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. One of the main strengths of the subject is the development of pupils' skills and the teaching of techniques to improve the standard and quality of their work. Teachers use art and design effectively to support and extend other subjects. Year 2 pupils, undertaking a wide-ranging religious education topic, produced exquisite pencil drawings of designs and artefacts they had observed, enriching the topic through their artwork. The school is aware of the new emphasis on design in art and the need to make more use of sketchbooks to record progression. Pupils are always encouraged to improve the quality of their artwork by evaluating what they have produced. This helps them to analyse their own work and that of their classmates and know how to improve it. All of them enjoy the subject, try to do their best and behave well. This is a reflection on the good teaching.

121. The subject is well co-ordinated by a talented teacher. Appropriate schemes of work are now implemented and there is a new system of assessment which is being used and evaluated for effectiveness. The co-ordinator monitors standards by scrutinising work on display throughout the school but she does not have any planned times when she can work alongside colleagues. Resources are satisfactory and are extended by visits to art galleries locally and by a residential visit where the arts and drama are studied. Visitors to the school

include local craftsmen who pass on first hand knowledge of their skills to pupils whilst improving the environment, for example the imaginative bowers made by willow weavers.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

122. Little teaching of design and technology was observed during the inspection. The following judgements are also based on an analysis of pupils' previous work, examination of teachers' planning and discussion with staff and pupils.

123. Pupils throughout the school reach the standards expected for their age. This is an improvement since the previous report for pupils in the older classes and a similar picture for those in the younger classes.

124. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' skills in designing and making are honed to a satisfactory standard. During the inspection, Years 3 and 5 were involved in projects. In Year 3, pupils looked at different types of packaging, disassembling the packages and studying the nets of the boxes. Using this information well, pupils made their own packages and designed their product logos and illustrations for their packages. There was effective use of ICT to create designs. In Year 5, pupils were designing and making a basic slipper shape to fit their own foot. They had made a paper prototype, learnt how to make a pattern template and then cut the fabric allowing for the seam. Most pupils were joining their sole to the upper with a back stitch or double running stitch. The examples seen were very good and had a variation of colour and pattern to add quality to their product.

125. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils draw simple but accurate pictures of what they intend to make. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils drew pictures of their glove puppets which they coloured with colours of their own choice. These colours were matched with the fabric they were to use. Pupils were developing their skills well in using basic sewing techniques to join two pieces together. The aim was to complete the puppets and devise a written set of instructions for making their glove puppet. There was an excellent display in the classroom of their previous topic, which was to make a healthy sandwich. The display covered the process of plan, make and evaluate and included each pupil's evaluation.

126. Pupils across the school are gaining valuable experience of working with a satisfactory range of materials such as paper, straws, glue and string to fasten or join. However, apart from experience of using scissors, the knowledge of other means of cutting and joining are limited. There were no examples of structures or frames that had been constructed from wood and only a small range of tools to cut and join rigid materials are available. In the most effective lessons, pupils use planning sheets well to create design proposals. However, not all are at the stage of incorporating design modifications during the making process.

127. In the limited number of lessons observed, the quality of teaching of design and technology across the school was never less than good. Tasks set were relevant, interesting and challenging, thus engaging pupils' interests and enthusiasm. However, progress and consistency of teaching and learning is uneven across the school. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use a wider range of tools and few opportunities for the pupils to engage in elements of the subject, such as construction. However, there are good standards in some of the examples of food technology seen. For example, an excellent lesson was seen in

Year 3 where pupils tasted a range of purchased sandwiches, evaluated them and voted on the 'most favourite shop-bought sandwich' from the results of their survey. They went on to learn about the importance of hygienic food preparation in advance of making their own sandwiches. They learned about the safe way to use tools and then chose their ingredients for their sandwiches. The same procedure of evaluation was



undertaken as with the shop bought sandwiches. The lesson ended with an excellent discussion and review.

128. Management is satisfactory. However, the policy is old and needs updating. The school has been working to the national guidance in design and technology but the full effect of this support is not yet showing across the school. Little monitoring is undertaken and the school is consequently unclear where its strengths and areas for development lie. Consumable resources are satisfactory. There is, however, an insufficient range of tools. This is likely to have an adverse impact on teaching and learning within the nationally recognised scheme and to prevent standards rising further.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

129. Little teaching of geography was observed during the inspection. Overall judgements about the quality of teaching are not possible. The following judgements are based on an analysis of pupils' previous work, examination of teachers' planning and discussion with staff and pupils.

130. Standards in geography are satisfactory at the end of both key stages. The standards reported at the time of the previous inspection have therefore been maintained. The analysis of pupils' work indicates that teachers' expectations of the quality of presentation of pupils' written work is good. In some topics, useful sheets are given to the pupils to record 'what I already know' and 'what I am hoping to learn'. Where these sheets are used, subsequent work is often more focused and pupils' learning at a faster, more purposeful rate.

131. Very good use is made of visits to enrich the curriculum and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding through direct and practical study. To an extent, this overcomes many pupils' difficulties in reading which inhibits their use of books for research. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of aspects of rivers because their work was largely centred around a river study done previously. They could describe where a river erodes, the water moving relatively quickly and tree roots being exposed, and where it deposits. They understood how a river moves material through erosion, transportation and deposition. In discussion, they used terms such as 'confluence' and 'tributary' accurately. They were clearly enthused by the visit. Back in the classroom, they remained keen and inquisitive to learn more.

132. Where teaching was observed, it was good. Good use is made of discussion, particularly to further pupils' understanding of what they have seen. In the Year 6 lesson observed, good links were established to literacy, and the teacher set high expectations of the pupils' work. In a good discussion of writing a report, pupils recognised they were writing in the past and the teacher challenged them to use some complex sentences.

133. The curriculum is currently being revised in line with current requirements. This has, quite rightly, been identified as a priority. New assessments, including pupils' self-evaluation, should be beneficial in tracking the progress of pupils individually and determining the effectiveness of the curriculum.

134. The recently-appointed co-ordinator has clear and appropriate plans for the subject's development. The very good use of visits will be extended to include better use of the school grounds. It is recognised that resources to support the modified curriculum are needed. Observations of teaching and learning are planned, and these will be important sources of information to plan future developments.

## **HISTORY**

135. Due to time tabling arrangements, very little teaching of history was observed during the inspection. Overall judgements about the quality of teaching are therefore not possible. The following judgements are based on an analysis of pupils' previous work, examination of teachers' planning and discussion with staff and pupils.

136. Standards in history are satisfactory at the end of both key stages. The standards reported at the time of the previous inspection have therefore been maintained. The analysis of pupils' work indicates that teachers' expectations of the quality of presentation of pupils' written work is good, as it is elsewhere in the curriculum. Some topics, for example in Year 6, begin very usefully with the 'aim' being discussed and known by the class. This gives a very clear focus to the work done subsequently. Within lessons, pupils often use a planning and recording sheet that asks questions such as 'questions to research' that enable them to think historically and organise their enquiry better.

137. The analysis of pupils' work particularly shows that much work of good standard is achieved, because the work is relevant to the pupils and within their understanding. In Year 6, for example, they understand the effect of war on ordinary people; men, women and children, and how their lives were changed. They have a good understanding of how to use primary sources of evidence. Pupils in Year 6 understand that photographs can be roughly dated depending upon what the people are wearing and using in them. The reasons they offer for changes are based on logical reasons.

138. Literacy skills are practised well in history, and teachers take many opportunities to use them. Consequently, pupils have a clearer understanding of the relevance to their work generally of what they are doing in literacy, and they apply themselves more purposefully. A variety of writing forms are used, including letter writing as an evacuated child. The content shows strong empathy and a good understanding of how traumatic this could be. Writing about how people would feel at the news of the outbreak of war gives pupils a strong story-line and some of their best writing results; for example, 'I was home feeding the baby. Shocked, upset and worried about our son away in the army, ...'. The limited writing skills which affected learning at the time of the previous inspection, are now better. Even so, the example given here is the exception rather than the rule. Standards overall, particularly in the use of punctuation and grammar, remain below average.

139. In the limited number of lessons observed, teaching was most effective when tasks planned were largely practical. Pupils were fascinated and enthused when handling and discussing primary sources of evidence. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils struggling to persevere with research using books, were reinvigorated when the teacher recognised this, dressed a pupil as Henry VIII, and invited the rest of the class to ask questions. The questions, and answers, demonstrated a reasonable knowledge of life at the time.

140. The curriculum is good, based on the nationally-recognised scheme of work. Very good use is made of visits and visitors, carefully matched to the scheme of work, to bring the curriculum alive. Throughout the school, pupils learn through these direct experiences. In discussion, through the clarity of their understanding and their clear recollections, they clearly demonstrate that this is when they learn best. Assessment links evaluation to the original aims of the topic, particularly to determine which pupils have, and which have not, met the original expectations. This should be very useful and informative, but it has been recently been introduced and it is therefore too early to judge.

141. Co-ordination of the subject is good. The revised curriculum and new assessment have been introduced, and the current emphasis on linking to literacy is beneficial to pupils' work in both subjects.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

142. Only a very small sample of teaching was seen and judgements are largely based on the analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning and records, displays in classrooms and talking with teachers and pupils.

143. Standards in ICT are judged to be above that expected of pupils of a similar age at Key Stage 1 and in-line with that expected in Key Stage 2. Pupils in the lessons seen are making good progress. However, the depth of understanding and general competence of some of the older pupils demonstrates a relative lack of previous experience, whilst some of the younger pupils knowledge and skills in use of computers, especially in Years 2 to 4, is much better. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in comparison with their prior attainment when using their ICT skills within their general classwork but they are not gaining the full educational benefit that is available through the use of ICT within their specific needs.

144. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good understanding of word processing, but their competence in other strands of ICT is weaker. Even then, much of the word processing is undertaken after the draft text has been written and corrected manually before being word processed. The use and understanding of the value of drafting work and editing using a computer is consequently insufficient. In Year 3, pupils use digital photography, complete with word processed captions, to record their work. In Year 4, pupils produce a good range of work across all subjects including word processed stories, poems using different fonts and colours, shape designs with in-fill of colours, examples of research of an historical, geographical and religious nature, and science investigations. In Year 5, pupils have begun to use spreadsheets, but at an elementary level.

145. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are able to use basic mouse control and this is developed further by use of drawing packages. In an excellent Year 2 lesson observed during the inspection, pupils were using a graphics program to compare the curving lines of the Jackson Pollock picture with the artwork of Piet Mondrian. The skills being developed in this lesson were to select straight lines and geometric shapes and flood fill to add colour to some of the shapes. Pupils were taught to use the "undo" command to rectify mistakes and were reminded how to save their work. The learning also brought in aspects of numeracy with the emphasis on straight lines. In Year 1, pupils draw and word process their names successfully, for example to add to their portraits.

146. Throughout the school, pupils' understanding of how to work and take advantage of listening centres, televisions and videos is satisfactory. Teachers plan their use thoughtfully and give pupils good opportunities which they enjoy. In a good Year 6 lesson, pupils used the television and video to research for information on the habitats that animals live in. In a good Year 3 lesson, pupils were learning how to access musical sound from a CD ROM and then record a sound sample on a tape recorder. However, there is a comparative weakness in control technology, although there are plans to address this, for example for Year 6 to use control technology to sequence traffic lights. Current equipment, such as a floor turtle and roamer, is not used to its full effect. The collection of data to use to create bar and pie charts, an area that would be useful in mathematical and scientific studies, is also comparatively weak. The subsequent possibilities to interrogate this data quickly and easily would also reinforce pupils' understanding of the effective uses of ICT.

147. Where teaching was observed, the quality was consistently good or very good. Teachers carefully plan worthwhile and productive tasks that pupils find relevant and interesting. Consequently, learning is of good quality.

148. The curriculum is good and carefully planned from the national guidance for the subject. The network is in place and pupils build up a record of what they do. Useful assessment is undertaken in line with the national guidance for the subject. In some classes, pupils' work has been collated into folders to record achievement. However, the time allocated to ICT varies greatly and is insufficient in some classes. In addition, teachers are limited by the range of equipment, not all of which is in good working order. Although resources are otherwise satisfactory, developing pupils' knowledge and understanding is hampered by having different computer systems in classrooms, confusing pupils particularly in the early development of their competence and skills. The combined effect of these shortcomings is detrimental to pupils' progress.

149. The subject co-ordinator has achieved much in a short time. Staff are undertaking relevant training to further raise their knowledge, understanding and competence in teaching the subject. The co-ordinator has the opportunity to work alongside colleagues in the younger classes, and this is beneficial to staff and pupils alike. Currently, no such opportunities exist in the older classes. Despite the enthusiasm of staff, developments are held up by the variety and limitations of equipment. The school is aware of this, and improvements are planned so that, for example, whole class teaching of skills using identical equipment will be possible.

## **MUSIC**

150. Pupils throughout the school attain standards in music above those expected for their age. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy their music making activities, especially singing. There is a visiting teacher for the violin and these pupils are making very good progress. The curriculum support from Sandwell Youth Music is very good and the school has a music specialist presently working with classes and their teachers. The success of this support was seen in the quality of teaching and learning in lessons given by teachers who had already had this support.

151. In Key Stage 2, pupils extend their learning through looking at sounds and how different sounds can represent a range of stimulus. For example, in a good Year 3 lesson,

pupils had listened to the stimulus of a piece of music before creating and painting their own chosen animals, to represent what they had heard. In this lesson they worked in groups to practice the movement of their animal and chose an instrument and sound to represent the animal. At the end of the lesson all groups performed their short musical action piece. Their creativity was very good and was accompanied by very sensitive playing on the instruments. Older pupils were developing rhythmic memory by thinking of a song they had learnt and singing and tapping the rhythm. They were also learning about the structures of music, culminating in the introduction of a piece of music that used the same rhythm sequences.

152. In Key Stage 1, pupils are able to tap out simple rhythms with one and two syllables. They are able to answer a question sung by the teacher using different pitched notes. The standard of pitch was very high for the majority of pupils and this was commented on by the teacher, much to the pleasure of the pupils. In a very good Year 2 lesson, pupils were using different voices to find their singing voice and were able to identify, select and name an instrument from a range of percussion instruments. The teacher placed symbol cards on the board and the pupils played the symbols representing sounds and their instrument, under the direction of a pupil, acting as a conductor.

153. Singing in school assemblies is good and the whole school voices were pitched well with clear diction. However, in hymn practice the standard of singing was not as good, largely because of lower teacher expectations. The practice started well and the pupils took part in warm-up activities and sang a familiar song well. However, when a new song was introduced there was too little teaching and the pupils relied solely upon listening to a tape for guidance. Consequently, they began to lose interest and sang with little feeling and very much out of pitch. This was the only weakness in all the music observed during the inspection.

154. Teaching overall is satisfactory, but with some good and very good examples. The specialist teacher has very good knowledge and understanding which is used to the benefit of pupils and teachers. Pupils gain from her clarity of teaching and explanation, and are enthusiastic learners in these lessons. Their teachers gain from working alongside such an accomplished teacher. In subsequent lessons, their teaching is of good quality. This represents very good value for money.

155. The curriculum is good. The scheme of work, based upon national guidance, gives teachers useful and practical guidance. A good range of events support classwork well. Years 5 and 6 have attended a 'music day' at the high school, appreciating the school orchestra and participating in singing with other junior pupils. Other musical events include string and brass demonstrations. An excellent display in the school hall is the result of pupils attending an arts course where they took part in developing an original pantomime. Pupils' musical compositions were recorded and also used for the live performance of the pantomime. In addition, pupils perform regularly for the elderly in the community.

156. Management of the subject is good. Although there is no specialist on the staff, very good use is made of expertise from outside the school, both to teach and lead staff training.

157. Overall resources are sufficient to teach music and there are plans to purchase electronic keyboards to add to the instrument collection. There is a good supply of a range of music on CD. However, the use of ICT is presently undeveloped in music.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

158. Pupils throughout the school attain overall standards that are above those expected for their age. In swimming, the vast majority of pupils reach the expected level by the age of eleven and many exceed it, standards are above average.

159. In Year 2, pupils invent and perform good short, linked sequences with a clear beginning, middle and end. They are beginning to consider how to incorporate contrasts in direction and level whilst still maintaining the flow of their sequence. They know how to do

good stretch and tuck jumps, and evaluate their star jumps with a partner so that they recognise areas for improvement, such as the landing.

160. In Year 6, pupils demonstrate good posture. Movements and balances are imaginative and creative. Pupils work with one another very co-operatively. For example, in a warm-up 'game', they discuss tactics and teamwork to make best use of the individuals in the group. They know the purpose of warm-up and stretching exercises and are very aware of their own, and other's, safety.

161. Teaching is generally good and occasionally excellent. Year 2 pupils are given excellent visual plans that enable them to organise and place apparatus independently. Teachers recognise that many pupils have limited vocabulary and link verbal explanations effectively to visual demonstrations, by themselves, other pupils or using the overhead projector, thereby ensuring pupils' understand the task while extending their verbal understanding. Rapport between staff and pupils is often excellent, and Year 2 pupils' faces light up with enthusiasm when they are challenged to add a balance to their sequences. Teachers have high expectations, for example that Year 6 will devise sequences that flow from one action to another. During lessons, teachers celebrate pupils' successes and then encourage them to extend their tasks further. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, pupils who have overcome the 'wobbliness' in their balances are congratulated but then encouraged to count to four whilst holding their balance.

162. The curriculum is good and well-balanced. Assessment by class teachers is monitored by the co-ordinator to see where help or curriculum changes may be needed. Some use is made of modern technology, such as a digital camera to show pupils what they have done and to help them to recognise how they might improve. This helps increase their understanding and, when they try again, it is with a clear focus and emphasis upon specific improvement. Once again, the digital camera is used to enable them to see how they have succeeded.

163. Co-ordination is excellent, although information is not gained from direct knowledge of teaching and learning. A clear action plan for the subject drives improvement. Resources have been audited, replaced and reorganised so that there are sufficient and they are readily accessible. Staff training has extended staff knowledge, understanding and awareness. The co-ordinator's own knowledge and expertise is used very well, for example to offer advice to colleagues. Excellent links are being established with local secondary schools so that staff may receive specialist training and pupils benefit from specialist training using specialist equipment. A very good range of events with other local primary schools are being developed.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

164. Throughout the school, standards in religious education are in line with the recommendations of the locally agreed syllabus. Progress is satisfactory at all stages and pupils systematically build their knowledge of Christianity and other major world faiths. This is an improving subject since the previous inspection when pupils had a restricted experience of other religions and cultures and did not visit places of worship other than the local church. Pupils at both key stages now know about different places of worship, religious symbols and celebrations in the family and the community. In Key Stage 1, pupils visit two local churches and contrast an old building with a modern one. They investigate ceremonies such as baptism.

A visit to a local church by Year 2 led to a highly successful lesson when pupils recalled, with the help of digital photographs taken on the visit, all the Christian features and artefacts they had observed and remembered much of the information given to them by the vicar. Pupils enjoy bible stories, making paper bag puppets for the story of Noah and illustrating it by artwork about the significance of the rainbow.

165. Study of the Bible continues in Key Stage 2. In Year 3, pupils bring in their own or family bibles to make an interesting collection. Pupils use prayer cards appropriately to write their own prayers, including those for the millennium, one of which won a local award. The interest of older pupils in Year 5 was deepened significantly by a father of a pupil who came to talk about his own studies of the Bible, passing on to pupils his specialised knowledge and enthusiasm. Throughout Key Stage 2, the study of Christianity is extended by learning about the other major world religions. Pupils become aware of the range of beliefs in contemporary society and the features some of them share. Many understand that people may hold strong personal beliefs and worship in different ways. This understanding is promoted and reinforced by corporate worship which is mutually supportive of religious education. The subject also gives good support to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Corporate worship takes place in a calm and reverential ethos. Assemblies carry moral and social messages which lead pupils to examine their own and other people's behaviour in relation to humanity and Christianity. During the inspection, one assembly theme tackled with sensitivity the theme of tolerance and welcome to strangers. Another, taken by a regular visiting lay minister, used a large puppet to attract interest and reinforce the assembly theme. Multi-faith work contains many elements which contribute significantly to cultural development.

166. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good lessons in both key stages when teachers have good knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject, thus generating pupils' interest. Behaviour is well managed, the good strategies used encourage pupils to listen carefully to their teachers. In the best lessons and assemblies, there is often original presentation of the theme and lessons are well paced and resourced. There is no longer inappropriate use of worksheets, a criticism at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils are given chances to write for themselves but these are insufficient to form a true picture of what the pupils have covered or their individual progression in the subject.

167. The curriculum is good. Comprehensive schemes of work, in accordance with the new locally agreed syllabus, ensure good curriculum coverage. The school's effective emphasis on providing a caring and cohesive social climate is supported by its work in religious education. There is a good range of artefacts available for the teaching of Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. The curriculum is effectively extended by visits to different places of worship including a mosque and by visitors who talk about their beliefs and give pupils first hand experience of religions such as Sikhism. The limitations of the school library restrict the opportunities for personal study and research. There is a new system of assessment of pupils' learning which is being evaluated.

168. Religious education is managed effectively. Good support is given. Although the good teaching ensures steady progress, the monitoring of standards in the subject over the whole school is too informal to be sufficiently rigorous to enable areas for development to be identified.