

INSPECTION REPORT

WATLING STREET JUNIOR & INFANT SCHOOL

Walsall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104202

Headteacher: Miss Jeanne Monckton

Reporting inspector: Mr John Francis
17976

Dates of inspection: 12th – 15th June 2000

Inspection number: 198003

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 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Watling Street
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Walsall
West Midlands

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Chair of Governors: Mr John Godfrey

Date of previous inspection: October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
John Francis	Registered inspector	Equal Opportunities Science Information Technology	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Robert Collinson	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
June Foster	Team inspector	Under Fives English Art Design & Technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Robert Lever	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs English as an Additional Language Mathematics Geography History Religious Education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Watling Street Primary School is an average size school with 210 pupils on roll including 44 children under the age of six: 26 of these part-time in the nursery. There are 94 boys, and 116 girls in the main school, which gives gender imbalances in some classes. There are 45 pupils on the register of special educational needs: slightly above average and two pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is broadly in line with the national average. Most pupils come from the immediate residential area, which is judged to have pockets of deprivation. Almost all pupils are of white English heritage and only two pupils come from homes where English is not the first language. Thirty-one pupils receive a free school meal, which is around the average. Pupils' attainment on entry into the nursery is broadly average although personal development is below what is expected for children of this age. Since the previous inspection there has been a significant change in the teaching staff including the appointment of the deputy headteacher and two newly qualified teachers.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective and improving school. Attainment is rising due to good teaching, effective monitoring and careful planning. The high level of good teaching in Key Stage 2 means that these pupils are now making better progress than in previous years. Although national test results in 1999 were well below average for all subjects at the end of Key Stage 1, and in English at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' current work shows a great improvement over the last year. Pupils have excellent attitudes to school and these contribute to the all round improvements in work, behaviour and relationships. The school is very well led. The headteacher, staff and governors work well together and are committed to raising standards. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Leadership and management are very good and committed to raising standards. Effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and pupils' progress have led to significant improvements;
- The quality of teaching is good, resulting in improved progress and higher standards. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Making this a very orderly school where pupils work well together and co-operate;
- Parents' links with the school are good. Parents are very supportive and have good relationships with all staff;
- Relationships throughout the school are excellent, contribute to the progress pupils make in lessons and are seen in the commitment to the wide range of extracurricular activities;
- Standards in information technology have risen due to good teaching.

What could be improved

- Pupils' attainment in English and science, particularly for the higher attaining pupils;
- Investigative work in science to challenge pupils' understanding more and in particular to give further opportunities for higher attaining pupils to investigate independently;
- The proportion of good teaching for children in the nursery and Year 1.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was last inspected in October 1997, it was judged to have serious weaknesses in a number of aspects of its work. The action points from that inspection have

been addressed well and school has made significant improvements in many aspects of its work. It no longer has serious weaknesses. Recent appointments have strengthened the teaching staff, and the strong leadership and management of the school has had a positive effect on raising the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment. Test results for 1999 show attainment in mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 have improved since the previous inspection, although test results in English show little improvement. Pupils' attainment in information technology is now above average due to the way it is taught and the developing skills of the teachers. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

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
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	D	E	E	D
mathematics	D	E*	C	B
science	E	E	B	A

Key

well above average A
 above average B
 average C
 below average D
 well below average E
 very low E*

Standards in English have been below or well below average for the last three years; however, current standards of work are much closer to the average. Work done through the National Numeracy Strategy is improving standards of attainment in mathematics; and attainment in science has improved significantly. Over time, the rising trend in attainment is broadly in line with the national trend. The school is now in line with the more ambitious targets it has set for improvement.

Standards in information technology are above average due to improved organisation and effective teaching. Standards in religious education meet those of the locally agreed syllabus, and in all other subjects, standards meet the expectations for pupils of this age, with the exception on history where standards are above average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes towards school. They are very enthusiastic and keen to work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	This is very good and sometimes excellent. Pupils play together well and understand the consequences of their actions.
Personal development and relationships	The social and moral development of pupils, and relationships throughout the school are excellent. Pupils feel valued by their teachers.
Attendance	Attendance is average and has improved since the previous inspection in line with the national trend.

The school is a very orderly community and previously noted weaknesses, for example, poor behaviour in the playground at lunchtime and in the dining room are no longer present.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	satisfactory	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.

At the time of the previous inspection the quality of teaching, was considered a serious weakness mainly because of the unsatisfactory and often poor quality found in Key Stage 2. Since then there have been a number of changes to the teaching staff. Alongside this, the headteacher's monitoring policy, with its target setting and support, has improved the quality of teaching. As a result, no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection and six out of ten lessons demonstrated good or very good teaching. There are now significant strengths in the teaching at Key Stage 2, where eight out of ten lessons are of good or very good quality.

In the early years teaching is satisfactory, and at Key Stage 1, including the current reception class, teaching is good, but the best teaching in Key Stage 1 is seen in the reception and Year 2. Here the teachers use a variety of teaching styles to suit the lesson. There is a good mixture of discussion, group and individual work and the way they talk to and question pupils, asking for their ideas and suggestions, encourages good language development.

Teaching is particularly effective in English and mathematics, where teachers' good understanding of the national strategies for these subjects, their good planning, preparation and basic skills teaching are raising their expectations of what pupils can achieve and as a consequence, pupils' attainment. This can be seen throughout the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced, ensuring continuity and progression in pupils' learning throughout the school and providing worthwhile opportunities that are relevant to the varying abilities of pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by the combination of good planning by the class teacher and the support given by the classroom assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The few pupils for whom English is not the first language of the home require no additional support other than that planned by teachers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	The provision for the pupils' social and moral development is very good. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory as is their spiritual development, which is an improvement on the previous inspection judgement.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good systems in place for monitoring pupils' progress and attainment, and for the general health, safety and welfare of pupils. There are good child protection arrangements and an effective behaviour policy that eliminates any oppressive behaviour or bullying.

The very good partnership that has been established with parents and the wider community, contribute positively to pupils' attainment and personal development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is very good, giving clear vision and direction to the work of the school. Good support is provided by an effective deputy headteacher, who is also a good model of teaching for other staff. The regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching, with its target setting and support has brought about significant improvements to the quality throughout the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well informed of the work of the school through regular reports from the headteacher and co-ordinators and their own visits, and they keep parents well informed. Although many are relatively new to the role, all are committed to the continuing success of the school. They are very supportive of the headteacher, but in return expect good management and accountability.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are effective systems for monitoring the performance of the school through analysing test results and acting on the information these provide to improve the curriculum and standards.
The strategic use of resources	The schools' budget is efficiently managed by the school's administrative staff and monitored regularly by the governing body. Procedures are well established and contribute to the smooth running of the school. Funds provided through specific grants are used effectively.

The staffing is a good mixture of experienced and newly qualified teachers, and classroom assistants provide good additional support. The quality and range of the school's learning resources are satisfactory, although the range of computers and systems in the computer suite make teaching information technology more difficult than it should be. The accommodation is generally satisfactory but some of the classrooms are small for the numbers of pupils. Careful consideration is given to major spending decisions, and the headteacher and governing body pay due attention to consulting about these and making sure they obtain the best value for money possible.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way their children work hard and achieve • The good behaviour of the pupils • The approachability of all staff in the school • The way the school works closely with parents • The way the school is led 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons

The parents' positive views of the school are supported by the findings of the inspection. The inspection also considers the range of activities provided outside of lessons through the

'Bright Sparks' initiative to be wide ranging and of good quality and well supported.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In national tests in 1999, the percentage of pupils in Year 6 who attained average standards for eleven-year-olds in English and mathematics was well below the national average. Results in English show little change from those reported in the previous inspection. Results for science were above average, and in both mathematics and science a higher than average proportion of pupils attained the higher Level 5. This was a significant improvement in science from the previous year, and was unexpected as the teacher's assessments judged attainment to be well below the national average, except for the proportion attaining Level 5, which was much closer to the final result. The higher number of pupils attaining Level 5 in mathematics and science raised the school's average scores and when these are compared with similar schools a different picture emerges: attainment in mathematics is above average, and in science, well above average.
2. For pupils in Year 2 at the end of Key Stage 1, test results in 1999 were well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. The teacher's assessment of pupils' attainment in science was also well below the national average. Results at the end of both key stages show improvement from the previous year and overall improvement over time is broadly in line with national trend.
3. The current work in pupils' books shows improved standards at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics, which are more in line with national expectations. New teachers have brought additional strengths and skills, which are clearly improving pupils' progress and raising standards. In addition the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact on raising teachers' expectations and pupils' attainment in mathematics.
4. Analysis of national and other test results by the headteacher and senior management team over the past two years is providing the school with good quality information, which is being used with increasing success to modify the curriculum and set targets for all pupils. These targets are reviewed during the year to see if they are still appropriate and are then revised based on the information gathered. As teachers' expectations continue to rise these targets are usually revised to increase the level expected. However, while these targets are generally appropriate, they do not as yet always fully stretch the highest attaining pupils.
5. By the time they are seven, pupils' skills in speaking and listening are satisfactory. This is maintained during Key Stage 2, where pupils are given many opportunities to speak to the whole class or when they are working in small groups.
6. By the ages of seven and eleven, pupils have made satisfactory progress and most pupils' reading skills are average. They are able to read a range of texts with suitable accuracy, enjoy books and offer opinions when talking about the plot or the characters. By the time they are eleven, most are able to read with expression and confidence and higher attaining pupils are able to recognise and discuss different types of books and illustrate their comments by finding appropriate references.

7. For the majority of pupils in Key Stage 1, attainment in writing is average. Pupils are introduced to a variety of writing styles; for example, letters, lists and charts, and younger pupils are developing an understanding of writing an account in the first person. Presentation and handwriting are good, letters are correctly formed and many pupils write in a joined flowing style. Many pupils are able to spell a good range of simple words and have a solid understanding of the relationships between letters and their sounds. Most pupils show an understanding of full stops but do not always use capital letters accurately. This progress is maintained at Key Stage 2. Here, pupils' writing is clear and when given the opportunity, they use appropriate vocabulary to take into account the audience they are writing for. A good example of this is in Year 5, where pupils draft letters giving reasons why young people are not all 'couch potatoes'. Whilst pupils use punctuation accurately, spelling is not as well developed and many pupils are unable to spell commonly used words at their level although they often write acceptable sounding alternatives.
8. There is evidence of improving standards in mathematics in Year 2, despite the below average results of the previous year. The current teacher has worked hard at finding out what pupils can do and has built successfully on this: the current seven-year-olds make good progress and attain above average standards. The attainment of pupils in Year 6 is in line with what is expected for pupils of this age. In the oral sessions at the beginning of lessons most pupils are developing the ability to explain their methods of working out answers. The well-managed introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has made a big difference to the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics, and is producing better progress for pupils of all levels of attainment throughout the school.
9. Most pupils in Year 2 attain average standards in science but few achieve better than this. The main reason for this is the amount of work that is common to all pupils regardless of prior attainment. This is also seen in the work in some other classes where low quality worksheets limit pupils' responses. Good follow-up work from a visit to the nearby nature reserve by pupils in Year 2, also built on their mathematical knowledge by using data collected on tally sheets to produce block graphs of the wildlife they had seen. By the time they are 11, standards are satisfactory but not as high as those recorded in last year's national tests. The current improvements overall are the result of better subject knowledge and planning by teachers. Whilst a greater focus on investigative and experimental science has been effective in raising attainment, there is still greater scope to develop this further, especially for the higher attaining pupils where there is insufficient opportunity for them to devise their own investigations or make their own hypotheses about what might happen.
10. Good planning and effective use of the computer suite have raised standards in information technology to above those normally expected for pupils by the ages of seven and eleven. Pupils are developing a wide range of skills, and good teaching throughout the school is building successfully on these. In religious education, pupils attain standards in line with those set out in the locally agreed syllabus. They have a satisfactory knowledge of Christianity and other major world faiths and their important festivals. Assemblies make a valuable contribution to pupils' understanding of these.
11. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in all other subjects, although standards in history at Key Stage 2 are above what is normally expected for pupils of this age. By the time they are eleven, most pupils achieve the required standards for swimming.
12. Assessment carried out on children when they enter school shows that attainment is

broadly average, although there are weaknesses in children's social skills. The majority of children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress through nursery and reception. By the time they are ready to begin compulsory education at five most are attaining the desirable learning outcomes in all areas of learning.¹

13. A good range of activities is provided for children in the early years to develop their language experiences, and through these they make satisfactory progress and achieve the standards expected for children by the age of five. Listening skills are emphasised and while children listen well, there are fewer opportunities for the youngest children to talk about their own experiences using their newly acquired vocabulary. Children show an interest in books, they handle these correctly and recognise that the print carries meaning. Some of the younger children recognise and know some letter sounds and many of the older children have a good initial sight vocabulary: attainment in reading is generally average.
14. There is an appropriate range of apparatus to support the understanding of mathematical concepts. In the classroom café, they are able to use equipment well to count, match and sort by colour and size. However, opportunities are often missed to extend their mathematical understanding through questioning or during daily routines, for example in role-play or counting as they line up.
15. In other areas of learning, children are provided with worthwhile activities to talk about the world in which they live, and a good range of indoor activities enables them to develop good co-ordination. Practise with pencils, felt pens, jigsaws and using modelling materials all effectively develop children's manipulative skills. However, there are fewer opportunities for children to express their ideas imaginatively outside the activities directed by the teacher.
16. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in most subjects, but good progress in mathematics, information technology and religious education. The carefully planned lessons, where work is suitably matched to their prior learning and needs, and the support provided by classroom assistants, both in the class and when they are withdrawn for additional help, all contribute to this.
17. The school uses data from teachers' assessments and national and other standardised tests to help set targets for these pupils' individual education plans and for statements of special educational need. Pupils with special educational needs are doing well against these specific targets and goals, and are making good progress, particularly when receiving extra support.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Throughout the school, most pupils, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language, are very keen, enthusiastic and eager to come to school. They listen attentively, follow instructions well and usually settle quickly to the task given. The pupils concentrate well, sometimes very well, during class work, and work diligently both independently and with others. This shows a significant improvement on the findings of the last report, especially in Key Stage 2 where pupils became "*easily distracted and did not complete the work set for them*". They are very interested in the life of the school and enjoy the extra-

¹ These are the areas of learning that include language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development that are considered desirable for children to attain before they are five and begin compulsory education.

curricular activities, school productions, fund raising and other activities organised by the school.

19. Pupils of all ages behave very well and are mindful of the school and class rules. They know right from wrong and are polite and courteous to teachers, each other, and to visitors. Pupils show respect for other faiths, traditions and cultures, and for the opposite sex. In the classroom and around the school, they move about sensibly and work hard. The pupils' attitudes generate a good working atmosphere throughout the school. Lunch is eaten in an orderly and social atmosphere with some pupils enjoying the outdoor "picnic" facilities: a good improvement from the last inspection where behaviour was often unsatisfactory at lunchtimes. The provision for children's personal and social development in the nursery class is good. The children generally respond well to the opportunities provided for them, treating each other and the nursery property with care and respect. They co-operate well and their behaviour is generally good.
20. Pupils have excellent relationships with each other and with adults. Pupils know that bullying is unacceptable and will be firmly dealt with: there are few instances of this. No bullying was seen during the inspection. There were no exclusions during the last twelve months. The absence of litter or graffiti, and the way pupils handle equipment with care show their respect for the school's resources and premises.
21. Various topics in lessons provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they do and realise that others may have a different view or belief from their own. Where they have the opportunity to take responsibility, pupils do so well. Pupils have class responsibilities and the Year 6 boys and girls act as responsible monitors looking after younger pupils during wet playtimes. All of these aspects of pupils' attitudes, values and personal development show a significant improvement since the last inspection.
22. The attendance rate of 94.4 percent is broadly in line with the national average. Registers are well kept and comply with statutory requirements. Arrangements for parents to notify the school when children are absent due to illness appear to work well. Punctuality is generally good and the school has effective arrangements for recording late attendance and following up unexplained absences.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

23. At the time of the previous inspection the quality of teaching, was considered a serious weakness mainly because of the unsatisfactory and often poor quality in Key Stage 2. Since then there have been a number of changes. There has been a major change of staff, particularly at Key Stage 2, and the rigorous recruitment policy followed by the school has led to good quality teachers being employed. Alongside this, the headteacher's monitoring policy, with its target setting and support has improved the quality of teaching significantly. As a result, no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection and six out of ten lessons demonstrated good or very good teaching.
24. Unlike at the time of the previous inspection, there are now significant strengths in the teaching at Key Stage 2, where eight out of ten lessons are of good or very good quality. Many of the teachers in Key Stage 2 have not been in the school very long, and for one teacher, only a matter of weeks. However, with the additional skills they bring there are clear signs of improvements in pupils' progress and attainment throughout the key stage.
25. In the early years teaching is satisfactory. In Key Stage 1 the best teaching is seen

in the reception and Year 2 classes. Here the teachers use a variety of teaching styles to suit the lesson. There is a good mixture of discussion, group and individual work and the way they talk to and question pupils, asking for their ideas and suggestions, encourages good language development. This is less effective in the other classes and not enough is done for the under fives to improve their speaking and listening skills early on by building on the range of experiences provided for them. In some lessons at Key Stage 1, pupils have to sit for too long listening to the teacher rather than being active learners: it is to their credit that they remain well behaved.

26. Teaching is particularly effective in English and mathematics. Here, teachers' good understanding of the national strategies for these subjects, their good planning, preparation and basic skills teaching are raising their expectations of what pupils can achieve and as a consequence, pupils' attainment. This can be seen throughout the school. Planning in all subjects is good, and for most lessons learning intentions are clear, but there are still occasions where these describe the activity pupils are to do rather than what the teacher wants them to learn. This makes it more difficult for teachers to judge how much pupils have understood by the end of the lesson or how effective their teaching has been. Teachers plan effectively for pupils with special educational needs; the combination of this good planning by the class teacher and the support given by the classroom assistants in class or when withdrawn for additional support means these pupils make satisfactory progress and often good progress against the targets in their individual education plans.
27. For all teachers, their secure knowledge of information technology and the good use they make of the school's computer room is raising attainment in this subject. Clear links are made with other subjects of the curriculum, such as English and mathematics through word processing or data handling. The effective way in which these lessons are organised, which for a proportion of the pupils involves good quality paper and pencil activities related to the topic, means that there is a lot of good direct teaching of the skills pupils need. In other lessons, teachers use their own enthusiasm and knowledge of a subject, for example, physical education, geography or environmental studies to inspire their pupils and produce good quality learning. This often links well to extra-curricular activities or, for many subjects, to regular homework, which extends pupils' learning and fosters good work habits.
28. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' presentation of work and keep this to a good standard across all subjects. They mark work regularly and consistently and are supportive of pupils' efforts. However, not enough of the marking identifies what pupils need to do to improve their work, or relates clearly to the learning intentions of the lesson.
29. The way in which teachers manage pupils' learning and pupils' very good behaviour allows them to use group work well to build on the good relationships found throughout the school and give good learning opportunities for pupils. They overcome some of the inadequacies of classroom space very effectively. In science, pupils co-operated well in mixed groups and shared responsibilities when they were investigating the effect of friction using a range of materials. This is beginning to develop their ability to think and plan, and their skills of investigation. However, while this provides valuable experiences, work in subjects such as science is sometimes over directed by the teacher and lacks the challenge needed for the highest attaining pupils that would encourage their independent thinking. This is also seen where teachers use low-level worksheets, often the same for all pupils, which require little in the way of response and do not give the teacher a clear view of what each pupil

can do. This is also sometimes seen where all pupils copy the same work from the board.

30. While no unsatisfactory teaching was seen, addressing the areas of weakness and sharing the best practice will address the school's aim of providing a consistently high standard throughout the school and improve pupils' learning even further.

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

31. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided by the school are good. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full and equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. The school curriculum is sufficiently broad to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, and religious education is in line with the locally agreed syllabus. The school also makes appropriate provision for the development of the pupils' personal and social skills. They learn about healthy life styles and gain an awareness of drug misuse, and the school has sensitively consulted with parents and adopted a sound policy for sex education.
32. Since the last inspection, significant improvements have been made to the curriculum to ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning. At that time, statutory requirements were not being met in design and technology, and in investigative and experimental work in science; mathematics was not being adequately addressed; and monitoring and evaluating the quality of the curriculum were unsatisfactory. These key issues have now been addressed. Subject co-ordinators now have a more clearly defined role than at the time of the last inspection. The school has effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and is successfully implementing the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies alongside its own procedures. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is particularly successful in promoting lively sessions, which are improving the pupils' skills in mental mathematics. In the literacy sessions in Key Stage 1, there is not always sufficient attention paid to the prior attainment of pupils when planning the individual or group tasks and this does reduce the progress some pupils make. The school has a strong commitment to improving its standards not only in national tests, but also to raising standards in the broad range of other subjects including history and design technology at Key Stage 1, and geography and physical education at Key Stage 2: key issues at the time of the last inspection.
33. For children under five, the programme of activities planned in relation to the recommended areas of learning for this age is satisfactory. However, the balance between work directed by the teacher and the range of other guided activities is not always appropriate. The children play well on their own or as part of a group, for example in the café. They are willing to ask for help and, when dressing as an astronaut, they are happy to wait their turn. Careful attention is paid to providing appropriate activities for the children in the areas of language, literacy and mathematics.
34. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in most subjects and is good in English, information technology and religious education in both key stages, and in mathematics in Key Stage 2. There are satisfactory structures in place that fully meet the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs and they have full access to all aspects of the curriculum.

35. During their years at the school, there are opportunities for all pupils to take part in a very good range of extra-curricular activities. A significant number of the pupils regularly attend many of the 'Bright Sparks' activities at lunchtime and after school organised by teachers and other adults. These activities include clubs for chess, athletics, play writing, knitting, French, dance, information technology, the environment and 'Ready, Steady, Cook'.
36. Unsatisfactory spiritual development was a key issue at the time of the last inspection. The school has addressed this and the provision for pupils' spiritual development, including the quality of the collective act of worship, is now satisfactory. There is a daily assembly for the whole school that is mainly Christian in character. Pupils observe prayers respectfully: hymn singing is enthusiastic. Provision for the pupils' social and moral development is very good. The school applies a consistent, very positive and encouraging behaviour policy and enables pupils to develop a strong sense of right and wrong. The staff provide good role-models, and have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour. The older pupils are made fully aware of their privileged position and of their responsibility to be a good example for the others. Older pupils take turns in being responsible for small tasks around the school such as assisting with lunchtime and break time supervision and escorting younger pupils from assemblies. Pupils are well prepared for the next stages of their education.
37. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for the pupils to learn about their own heritage. In history, for example, the pupils are taught about the Victorian times, which is brought to life as they celebrate the school's birthday. The Victorian Day was successful in bringing parents and other members of the local community into school and received significant coverage on local television news. The observation of traditions throughout the year makes a regular contribution to cultural development. Pupils gain an insight into cultures other than their own through studies of World Faiths in religious education. The school also provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to learn about the richness and diversity of other cultures and there is an appropriate range of multi-cultural books. There are examples of pupils studying Aboriginal art and listening to and interpreting the music from other cultures. Pupils also had the opportunity to study Japanese culture when the school took part in a teacher exchange scheme.
38. The school has well developed links with the community, and recent visitors have included the police, the school nurse, local clergy, several local residents and a theatre group. There are links with a supermarket chain and other local businesses, which help to broaden the experience of the pupils and make a valuable contribution to their education.
39. The close co-operation with the high school, to which most pupils transfer, is successful in easing the transfer process for pupils. This also includes curricular links with the use of high school staff and resources.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. Care and concern for pupils are apparent in all aspects of the daily life of the school. Teachers know their pupils well and are able to provide a level of support and guidance that contributes positively to pupils' educational standards of attainment. Positive reinforcement and praise of pupils' academic and personal achievements are features of the school. Teachers show genuine kindness and concern for their

pupils. Pupils' attainments are assessed regularly through national and other standardised tests. These results are recorded and carefully analysed to look for improvement and areas for development. The targets set from these are regularly reviewed and revised: this revision is mainly upwards as both teachers' and pupils' expectations continue to rise. There are effective assessment procedures in place to identify pupils with special educational needs, which are fully understood by staff, and the school provides well for pupils who are known to need particular attention.

41. The quality of personal support for pupils is reflected in their positive attitudes. Behaviour and discipline procedures are clear and effective with a positive approach through praise and example. Courtesy and good conduct are accepted as the norm in the school, and this is evident in the absence of any aggression or bullying.
42. The school monitors absences thoroughly and promotes good attendance through the use of yearly certificates for 100 percent attendance. The school is considering using termly attendance certificates to provide pupils with a more realistic incentive for good attendance. There is close liaison with the educational welfare officer, who is in school regularly and follows up the small number of pupils whose attendance records give cause for concern.
43. There is a written health and safety policy, recently reviewed and redrafted, and a governor with responsibility for health and safety issues who carries out safety inspections each term with the headteacher. Fire drills are carried out each term. Several members of staff have received training in first aid procedures.
44. The child protection policy has recently been reviewed. The headteacher, as child protection co-ordinator, has received training in child protection and related issues, and all teaching staff, non-teaching assistants and welfare assistants are familiar with child protection procedures. The school is successful in promoting the health, safety and general well being of its pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The good partnership that has been established with parents contributes positively to pupils' attainment and personal development. Parents particularly appreciate the way the school works closely with them and the approachability of all of the staff. The school provides good information to parents about the school and about pupils' work and progress through regular newsletters, informative annual reports and termly parents' evenings. At Key Stage 1, parents' involvement with their children's work at home mainly takes the form of helping with reading. Parents are encouraged to share books with their children at home and communicate with the class teacher via the reading diary. At Key Stage 2, parents are also encouraged to help with maths, spellings and topic work. While a number of parents did not feel the amount of homework was always right, it is generally appropriate for pupils of this age. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are properly involved in identifying their needs. They provide appropriate support and regularly review their child's progress.
46. Parents are welcomed into school and feel welcome in school. A number are involved in helping in the classroom in a variety of ways, for example, reading, information technology and other school activities such as accompanying classes on educational visits. This help provides a significant contribution to the work of the school.

47. The school has an active Parents and Friends Association which is successful in organising a range of social events and providing valuable additional resources through fund raising. Money raised by the Parents and Friends Association has been used in recent years to buy books, computers and printers, contributing to the improvements in information technology teaching.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. At the time of the previous inspection the headteacher had only been in post for six weeks. Nevertheless, the inspection judged the headteacher to be *“providing effective leadership”*, bringing *“energy, skills, experience and commitment to bring about and sustain school improvement.”* This judgement has been more than justified. The headteacher has a clear view of what the school needs to do and what sort of school it should be. Since the previous inspection there have been many positive changes and improvements taking the school from one that was judged to have serious weaknesses to a much more successful and still developing school with a very good ethos and a strong commitment to improvement.
49. The headteacher and deputy headteacher form an effective team and provide very good leadership to the school. They are well supported by the senior staff and governing body, and have the confidence of the parents who are very supportive of the change made over the last four years. There are effective systems for monitoring the performance of the school through analysing test results and acting on the information these provide to improve the curriculum. Careful analysis of the results over the last three years has identified strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, and the curriculum, and action has been taken to remedy these. As a result, standards have risen significantly in mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2, although this has not yet had the desired impact on English, especially in writing. The regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching, with its target setting and support has brought about significant improvements to the quality throughout the school. The management principle of “monitor – improve – change” is beginning to come into all aspects of the school’s performance. Through all of these, the school clearly fulfils its stated aims, values and purposes.
50. Governors are well informed of the work of the school through regular reports from the headteacher and co-ordinators and their own visits, and they keep parents well informed. Although many are relatively new to the role, all have a deep commitment to the continuing success of the school and to addressing and removing the previously identified areas of serious weakness. They are very supportive of the headteacher, but in return expect good management and accountability. The school development plan creates an effective link between governance and management. Staff and governors are involved in producing it and in monitoring its impact; it provides a clear direction to the school for the next three years.
51. The school’s budget is efficiently managed by the school’s administrative staff and monitored regularly by the governing body. Procedures are well established and contribute to the smooth running of the school. Funds provided through specific grants are used appropriately; for example, the Single Regeneration Budget fund supports pupils’ language development through schemes such as “Books and Beyond” aimed at encouraging them to become regular readers. Financial decisions are closely linked to school improvement and to the priorities of the school’s development plan, although these will need some modification as priorities and spending patterns are revised. Careful consideration is given to major spending decisions and the headteacher and governing body pay due attention to consulting

about these and making sure they obtain the best value for money possible. Recommendations from the most recent audit report are being addressed.

52. There has been a significant change of teaching staff since the last inspection and the current staff provides a good mixture of experienced and newly qualified teachers. The school's rigorous recruitment and selection policy has resulted in good quality teachers being employed. Teachers newly appointed to the school, and newly qualified teachers are well supported by the headteacher and mentors. Although formal appraisal is not taking place, there are professional development discussions with staff and already the school has a draft 'Performance Management' scheme in preparation for the introduction of this nationally during the next school year. Very recent appointments have strengthened the teaching staff, bringing additional skills and knowledge, for example in literacy. Teachers are well deployed and there is now a good balance of curriculum strengths across the school. With the changes over the last two years, many of the co-ordinators are relatively new to their roles and are still developing these, but are involved in setting out priorities in their subject action plan. The special needs co-ordinator has too little time to carry out the duties required of the post and this reduces the impact of monitoring. However, suitably qualified classroom assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs, particularly in literacy.
53. The quality and range of the schools' learning resources are satisfactory, although the range of computers and systems in the computer suite make teaching more difficult as teachers often have to provide two explanations for the tasks because of the two different systems in use. This makes unnecessary work and although pupils make good progress in information technology it is because of the quality of the teaching rather than the equipment.
54. The accommodation is generally satisfactory, but some of the classrooms are too small for the numbers of pupils in the class. This makes it more difficult to carry out practical work, although teachers are very adept at finding ways around the problems. The hall serves as a place of worship, a gymnasium and a dining room and while adequate for most things, does restrict the range of physical activities for the larger classes, particularly of older pupils. Good use is made of additional space in school to provide a computer room and small rooms for withdrawing pupils for extra support. Outside, there is a good hard playground surface, although the playground markings are now somewhat faded, and a large school field, suitably marked for a range of games and activities. The grounds also provide opportunities for pupils to study natural history during lessons or through after-school clubs. The provision for early years children is satisfactory, with an interesting and secure outdoor area.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. In order to improve the school further, and raise standards to a higher level, the governing body, headteacher, and staff should:
- 1) raise standards in English;
(paragraphs 1,2,3,7,13,72,77 & 78 refer)
 - 2) raise standards in science, and improve the quality and range of investigative and experimental work to challenge pupils' understanding more, and give further opportunities for higher attaining pupils to investigate independently;

(paragraphs 2,4,9,29,99,100,101 & 102 refer)

- 3) Improve the consistency of teaching through the school by raising the quality of teaching in the nursery and Year 1.

(paragraphs 13,14,15,25,33,69,72,73 & 76 refer)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Improve the consistency of marking pupils' work; (*paragraph 28*)
- Improve the arrangements for monitoring special educational needs; (*paragraph 52*)
- Review the provision for information technology to create a more coherent system. (*paragraphs 53 & 123*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

56. Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

57. Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Un-satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	17	44	39	0	0	0

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

58. Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	13	197
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a	31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	45

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	29

59. Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

60. 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
		1999	14	10	24
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	10	9	
	Girls	9	9	9	
	Total	16	19	18	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	67 (77)	79 (81)	75 (84)	
	National	82 (80)	83 (85)	87 (83)	

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	10	8	
	Girls	9	9	9	
	Total	18	19	17	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (54)	79 (71)	71 (86)	
	National	82 (80)	86 (83)	87 (81)	

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

61. 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
		1999	16	13	29
National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	7	14	
	Girls	9	9	11	
	Total	15	16	25	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	52 (44)	55 (20)	86 (33)	
	National	70 (63)	69 (62)	78 (68)	

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science	
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	7	6	
	Girls	8	8	8	
	Total	13	15	14	
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	45 (50)	52 (47)	48 (50)	
	National	68 (63)	69 (64)	75 (68)	

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

62. Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	181
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

64. Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	31
Average class size	26.6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	70

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	37

Number of pupils per FTE adult	14
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63. Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	-	-
Black – African heritage	-	-
Black – other	-	-
Indian	-	-
Pakistani	-	-
Bangladeshi	-	-
Chinese	-	-
White	4	-
Other minority ethnic groups	-	-

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

65. Financial information

Financial year	1999/ 2000
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	£
Total income	384,510
Total expenditure	356,430
Expenditure per pupil	1,748
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,024
Balance carried forward to next year	32,104

FTE means full-time equivalent.

66. Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	214
Number of questionnaires returned	51

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	47	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	36	8	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	53	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	47	18	8	0
The teaching is good.	53	39	6	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	45	2	8	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	27	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	27	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	57	41	2	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	61	33	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	32	6	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	37	12	2	8

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

67. At the time of the last inspection, it was reported that children made good progress in the area of language and literacy. The judgement of this inspection is that the curriculum is appropriate and children make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning.
68. At the time of the inspection, almost all children in the reception class are over the age of five and are therefore included in Key Stage 1. There are currently 28 children attending the nursery part-time.
69. The school provides a safe, caring environment for children aged under five. They are offered a wide range of experiences within a broad and balanced curriculum that satisfactorily covers the areas of learning expected for children of this age. The school makes very good use of educational visits and visitors to enrich all areas of the curriculum offered. Relationships with adults are good. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory, the nursery and reception teacher plan well together. The reception teacher has a secure knowledge and understanding of the Early Learning Goals. However, in the nursery, questioning and the development of children's language are not always used effectively to extend their vocabulary and enhance their understanding. There are often too few opportunities for children to explore and repeat experiences according to their needs.
70. On entry into school, the attainment of the children is generally around that which is expected nationally, though there are some weaknesses in children's social skills. The majority of children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and by the time they are five, most are likely to achieve the standards which are expected. Accommodation is adequate for the number of children on roll and is used satisfactorily to accommodate the range of activities offered.

Personal And Social Development

71. The provision for children's personal and social development in the nursery class is good. Children co-operate well, taking turns, for example, when dressing up as an astronaut, sharing resources for counting, mark making and in sand play. Behaviour is generally good. The children generally respond well to the opportunities provided for them, treating each other and the nursery property with care and respect. Relationships at all levels are satisfactory, children are confident working in small groups with the nursery teacher or student and, when given the opportunity and encouraged, they show initiative. When changing for physical education, they are able to demonstrate appropriate levels of personal independence.

Language and Literacy

72. Much attention is given to linguistic and language experiences and a good range of activities are provided. Children make satisfactory progress in these areas and achieve national standards. Suitable emphasis is placed on the development of listening skills and children listen well. However, there are few opportunities provided for pupils to talk about their own experiences, using newly acquired vocabulary. Not enough use is made of time for children to evaluate their work or engage in stimulating discussion. Children show an interest in books, handle books correctly and recognise that print conveys meaning. Some of the younger children

recognise and know some letter sounds, many of the older children have a good initial sight vocabulary and attainment in reading is generally average.

Mathematics

73. There is an appropriate range of apparatus to support the understanding of mathematical concepts. Children in nursery make satisfactory progress and achieve average standards. In the classroom café, they are able to use the equipment well to match and sort by colour and size and to count. Some children are able to understand the language used to compare things, such as greater and smaller, and are beginning to develop skills in estimating. However, questioning by the teacher does not always reinforce mathematical concepts or stimulate children's thinking. Opportunities for children to extend their mathematical understanding during the daily routines are sometimes missed, for example, in role play or counting as pupil line up or fasten buttons. More effective use could be made of these by staff to encourage children to solve simple addition and subtraction problems.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

74. Children attain average levels of knowledge and understanding of the world. Many worthwhile activities and visits are provided for children to talk about and explore the world in which they live. They visit local churches, and joined in the school's Victorian celebrations. During the week of inspection, children are undertaking work relating to a visit to the moon: they experience a variety of materials such as sand and bubble wrap, discovering their properties by walking on them and feeling them. Such materials are used well to stimulate children and encourage imaginative thinking. Most children could make sensible suggestions as to what an astronaut could use for shelter and food and where he or she could sleep. In the scientific area of learning, children have the opportunity to discover how heat changes materials when baking. Overall, the teaching of this area is satisfactory; however, opportunities for children to explore independently and talk about what they have learnt are sometimes missing.

Physical Development

75. In physical development, the children make satisfactory progress, and are likely to achieve desired standards by the time they are five. Pupils' physical skills are average. An appropriate range of indoor activities enables children to develop good co-ordination, and children move confidently around the hall during dance. Children follow instructions and are able to respond positively. When given the opportunity to express themselves, they respond well. Such opportunities, however, are few. Practise with pencils, felt pens, jigsaws, using modelling and painting materials are used effectively develop children's progress in their manipulative skills.

Creative Development

76. Children make satisfactory progress in creative skills and attain average levels of development. Through using a range of painting and model making activities, children learn how explore colour and texture. They confidently use pencils and paint. Classroom displays, such as the castle and moon craters, are used well by staff to enable children to develop an understanding of shape and texture. An appropriate range of opportunities is provided for the children to develop their music skills, such as listening to percussion instruments and story/music tapes. There are fewer opportunities during less directed activities for children to express their ideas imaginatively.

ENGLISH

77. In national tests for seven-year-olds in 1999, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 2, or the higher Level 3 in reading was well below national averages. Pupils' attainment in writing was below national averages, both for the proportion achieving Level 2, or the higher Level 3. When compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment was well below average in reading, but broadly in line with the average for writing.
78. In 1999 test and assessment results in English for eleven year olds, indicate that the percentage of pupils attaining and exceeding the expected Level 4 was well below the national average. When compared with similar schools, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 was well below average: however, the percentage attaining the higher Level 5 was broadly in line.
79. A key issue in the last inspection report was to raise the standard of attainment and progress in writing and speaking and listening to national expectations at both key stages. Inspection evidence suggests that standards this year are more in line with national expectations, and have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
80. In lessons in Key Stage 1, pupils demonstrate average speaking and listening skills. Almost all pupils show confidence and most usually listen carefully, making appropriate responses. A good example of this was seen where pupils listened to and responded to 'oy' and 'oi' phonemes. The progress made in Key Stage 1 is maintained in Key Stage 2. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in speaking and listening are average. Pupils are given opportunities to express ideas and feelings, for example, before summarising a passage from the story 'Goodnight Mr. Tom'. They are encouraged to talk to each other and participate in group and paired discussions. Pupils are confident when answering questions and respond appropriately when speaking to adults. They are generally able to ask appropriate questions and develop an argument. A very good example of this was seen when pupils worked on a persuasive text 'Looking after the Earth'.
81. By the age of seven, attainment in reading is average and pupils make good progress: most are able to read appropriate texts with reasonable accuracy. They enjoy books and can give an account of their favourite stories, offering opinions when talking about the plot and characters. By the age of eleven, attainment in reading is average and good progress is made in relation to prior attainment. Pupils are able to read texts with expression and confidence. Higher attaining pupils are able to discuss the plot and characters in a favourite book in some detail. They are able to discuss the genre of the books and summarise their reading by selecting essential points to illustrate this. Pupils can explain clearly how the library is organised, that fiction and non-fiction books are housed in different parts of the library, know how to locate relevant books and locate information quickly by using contents and index pages.
82. For the majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 attainment in writing is average. Many pupils are able to spell a good range of simple words and have a solid understanding of letter sound relationships. Most show an understanding of full stops but do not use capital letters consistently. Pupils know the difference between different types of writing and make clear distinctions between fact and fiction, for example, when studying a text about snails. In the reception class, pupils learn strategies for thinking ahead about what they intend writing on a post card. Attainment in handwriting is above average; letters are correctly formed, consistent in size, and in Year 2 the majority of pupils are joining their writing to give a flowing

script style.

83. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in writing is average, and these Year 6 pupils have made good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils are introduced to a variety of different styles of writing, for example, letters, lists, and charts. Pupils' writing communicates meaning and, when given the opportunity, they use appropriate vocabulary to take account of the specific audience. Good examples of this are seen in Year 5, where pupils drafted letters giving reasons why young people are not all 'couch potatoes', or pupils in a Year 4 lesson using speech bubbles. Younger pupils are developing an understanding of writing a first person account. However, in some classes, pupils are over-directed by the teacher and not always provided with enough opportunities to make choices about the style of writing they feel is most appropriate to use. In some classes, opportunities for pupils to produce pieces of extended writing are limited. While there is some evidence of drafting, more often than not this tends to be simple editing. A good example of pupils refining and improving the quality of a piece of work was seen in Year 3, when pupils worked as a class to improve a piece of writing done by one of the pupils. The standard of handwriting and the presentation of work throughout the key stage are good.
84. Other areas of the curriculum make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' competence in English. For example, pupils are developing appropriate mathematical, scientific and technical vocabulary. They listen well and follow instructions carefully. Reading and writing skills are adequately developed across subjects.
85. Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to English are good and relationships with their teachers are very good. They behave very well in their lessons, are enthusiastic and concentrate on their work. Pupils are helpful and respond well to collaborative tasks when they are given the opportunity. This is evident when pupils are undertaking work on 'looking after the Earth'. Pupils handle books and other materials with care and sensitivity.
86. Teaching is good in almost all lessons in Key Stage 1, and in Key Stage 2 teaching is good or very good throughout. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of English. There is a satisfactory balance in most lessons in terms of whole class, group and individual activities. The literacy hour is implemented well throughout the school; however, where pupils have to sit for long periods of time this affects the quality of both teaching and learning. Most short-term planning is good, although independent work is specifically matched to the low and average abilities of pupil groupings. As a result, higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. In one class, planning does not clearly identify the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils are to acquire. Whilst all work is conscientiously marked, the quality of marking is inconsistent throughout the school. Not all of this links to the learning objective of the lesson or clearly identifies what pupils need to do to improve their work.
87. Where teaching is very good, teachers are enthusiastic, positive and encouraging. They make English exciting and provide an emotionally and intellectually safe environment for their pupils to learn. Their expectations are high and they question pupils well to promote vocabulary and to extend their thinking. Marking is thoughtful, positive and is used well to set targets for future learning. They provide opportunities for collaboration and discussion and encourage pupils to be confident when offering ideas. Teachers use guided reading to develop independence in identifying the main themes, characters and ideas in stories. In these sessions, teachers explore the text with pupils and teach higher order reading skills well. In these lessons, pupils make good progress in their learning.

88. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. This is because of the good provision in both key stages, the targeted support that pupils receive from the teachers who specifically work with them, and from the very effective support of the classroom assistants.
89. The subject is well managed and the arrangements for the implementation of the literacy hour have been effective. English is being successfully monitored and the school has plans to develop this further to include revised portfolios of levelled and moderated work. However, at present the outcomes from this monitoring are not always linked sufficiently to how the curriculum and teaching can be used more effectively to target the higher attaining pupils.

MATHEMATICS

90. As a result of the successful introduction of the numeracy strategy and an improvement in the quality of teaching, standards have improved across the school.
91. In the end of key stage national tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4, the national expectation, was well below the national average, although the percentage exceeding it at Level 5 was high. Because of the high number of pupils attaining Level 5, when the average point scores are calculated it shows that performance was above average in comparison with similar schools. Inspection evidence and available data indicate a significant rise in the percentage achieving the national expectation in the present Year 6, and standards overall more in line with the national average. Trends in performance over the last four years have been erratic with a big fall in 1998 and then a significant improvement in 1999. Pupils with special educational needs receive well-targeted support and are making good progress.
92. By the time they are eleven, most pupils have a good understanding and knowledge of basic computation, know their multiplication tables up to ten, can convert percentages to fractions and use and explain their mental strategies well. In the areas of mathematics dealing with shape and space, they construct common two-dimensional shapes, draw angles accurately using a protractor, and identify various forms of symmetry. They collect data and use a range of graphs, including line graphs, to display it.
93. In the 1999 national tests at the end of Year 2, the percentage of pupils achieving or exceeding the national expectation was well below the national average, although their average scores were close to the average for similar schools. Evidence from the present inspection shows a significant improvement with pupils now attaining above average standards. There is a significant rise in the percentage of pupils exceeding the national expectation, with standards in numeracy generally above the national average. Pupils add and subtract numbers to 20 mentally and understand the place value of numbers up to 100 and show a good understanding of odd and even numbers, either individually or as part of a sequence. Most pupils are developing the ability to explain their methods of working in mental work. The implementation of the daily mathematics lesson is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. This judgement shows an improvement on the findings of the last inspection when standards were judged to be average. As with Key Stage 2, trends over time are erratic with a similar big fall in 1998 and an improvement in 1999, which has been successfully built on.

94. By the age of seven, in their work on shape and space, they identify most two-dimensional shapes and look at the difference it makes when you rotate a shape. Most pupils measure well using standard units like centimetres and litres, and using both digital and analogue clocks are able to identify half and quarter hour times.
95. Other subjects make a sound contribution to mathematics. Pupils measure accurately in design and technology and practise number skills in information technology. In science, they make tallies, handle data, measure temperature and time and graph their results. They use time lines in history, and in geography use co-ordinates and scale.
96. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. At Key Stage 1 they are satisfactory overall, but good in Year 2. At Key Stage 2 they are good overall and very good in Year 6, where, for example the teacher keeps pushing the pace "Come on. Come on. Quick." In these lessons pupils learn well. Teachers show commitment and work conscientiously to promote high standards and pupils make good progress. The findings of this inspection are an improvement on the previous inspection, particularly at Key Stage 2, when teaching was judged to be mainly satisfactory and pupils made satisfactory progress. In most lessons, teachers clearly explain the purpose of tasks, indicate that they have high expectations of what can be achieved, and make skilful use of questions to probe and extend pupils' understanding. Throughout the school, the teachers' management and control of pupils are good, and these approaches help all pupils to concentrate and take advantage of the skilful introductions to lessons and the thorough evaluations of what has been learned. Very good relationships lead to a positive learning environment where pupils are attentive and concentrate well. These elements are good features of most lessons. Resources are carefully prepared and provide pupils with good opportunities to practise skills and consolidate their understanding. Teachers build effectively on what pupils already know and understand, give a consistent emphasis to practical calculations, and work hard to help individuals to develop the appropriate mathematical vocabulary and explain their strategies. This is a result of more sharply focussed teaching in line with the National Numeracy Strategy framework, which has been successfully implemented. Clear planning ensures work is well matched to the needs of all pupils, including the higher attainers and those with special educational needs.
97. The co-ordinator manages the subject very well. She monitors planning and pupils' performance, and has time to formally monitor teaching and give feedback, addressing a weakness identified in the last report. She has successfully ensured the introduction of the numeracy strategy and seen an improvement in teaching and learning and the raising of standards. Assessment procedures, identified as a weakness in the last inspection, are now in place and effective, and used to inform future planning well.

SCIENCE

98. Over the last two years, pupils' attainment by the age of eleven has been rising and currently standards in science are around the national average. National tests in 1999, however, recorded an above average proportion of pupils attaining Level 4, and the higher Level 5. This was unexpected, as the teacher's assessments judged attainment to be well below the national average, except for the proportion attaining Level 5, which was much closer to the final result.

99. Over the previous three years, pupils' attainment had been consistently well below both the national average and that of similar schools at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, although the previous inspection report judged standards to be average. The current improvements are the result of better subject knowledge and planning by teachers and a greater focus on investigative and experimental science. As a result, all of the teaching observed was of good quality in both key stages. Whilst this has been effective in raising attainment, there is still greater scope to develop this further, especially for the higher attaining pupils where there is insufficient opportunity for them to devise their own investigations or make their own hypotheses about what might happen.
100. Teachers use pupils' very good behaviour and very positive attitudes and approaches to science by devising many activities where pupils have to work as a group, share ideas and co-operate to achieve their outcome. Occasionally, teachers make these groups too big, which prevents all pupils from being actively involved in the discussions or the investigation. However, teachers do move between the groups and use good questioning to check on all pupils' understanding. These questions prompt and guide pupils' reasoning and with the use of accurate vocabulary encourage their scientific thinking, which leads to improved learning. In Year 4, all the pupils worked together well to investigate the effect of friction between a range of materials and surfaces. While the lesson was successful, pupils measured and recorded their findings carefully, and there was some good discussion, there was not enough opportunity for pupils to make predictions before they started about what might be the possible outcome of their experiments. Although this was a good lesson, that extra element would have given pupils an even greater insight into what investigative work is all about.
101. Pupils' books show a good coverage of all aspects of science and teachers make effective links between science and other subjects. The Year 2 lesson following a visit to a wildlife habitat, used mathematical skills, such as making a tally, and then used this information successfully to draw and interpret block graphs. Other lessons use mathematics, for example, to measure and record the distance a car will travel down a slope when the angle is changed. In this experiment the pupils were also able to recognise the need for consistency to ensure it was a fair test. The presentation in pupils' books is satisfactory and most books show progress in writing and drawing. This progress is less evident where teachers use unnecessary worksheets, or where all pupils copy down the same result from an experiment. This does not allow teachers to have a clear view of what pupils can achieve and slows their learning. This is also seen in some of the marking in pupils' books where few teachers make comments about what pupils need to do to improve their work, or relate the marking to their learning intention for the lesson.
102. The subject co-ordinator has only been responsible for the subject from the start of the school year, but has a clear view of what is necessary to improve attainment. Since then, the policy has been revised and the scheme of work updated and linked to guidance published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. As part of this work, folders are being developed for each class that include planning for the year and examples of pupils' work. Teachers are beginning to use the expectations written at the start of each unit of work in the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme to guide their planning and set appropriate standards. This is proving effective and where it is linked with the clear learning objectives, is making teachers' assessments more accurate. This should provide the greater level of challenge needed for the higher attainers. The resources in school are generally adequate and the school grounds and nearby nature reserves provide good facilities for studying

the natural world. However, as experimental and investigative work becomes more of a feature of everyday teaching, additional resources will be needed to support the group work linked with this.

ART

103. Little teaching of art was observed during the inspection. However, examples of pupils' previous work were available, and pupils were happy to talk about their work in art. This evidence, along with planning and discussion with teachers, indicates standards are similar to those expected for pupils of this age.
104. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils demonstrate skills in using a range of media, tools and techniques in their artwork. They are able to mix their own paints and choose their own materials. An example of this is seen when pupils are making sculptures by selecting from a range of natural materials. In reception class, pupils are beginning to show an awareness of the artistic elements of line, tone, colour and shape in their observational drawings of shells and stones. They are able to select the media of their choice and the colour and size of paper. There is less evidence of teachers using the work of well-known artists to help develop ideas and techniques. In Year 1, art is used well to develop work undertaken at the museum. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to develop the theme of their work incorporating a range of designing, modifying and evaluating skills. A good example of this was seen in the work of Year 6, when studying the work of Guiseppe Arcomboldo. Pupils used a 'viewing window' made of card to select a section of their work and recreated this using primary, related secondary colours and pencil to create a tile. They then considered further use of the design for wallpaper and textiles. The library has a satisfactory number of books and examples of art from other cultures, which extends pupils' interest, knowledge and understanding of art in a wider perspective. Whilst sketchbooks are used throughout the school, this is not consistent in the frequency of use.
105. The co-ordinator undertakes an annual audit, which she uses well to set targets for individual year groups. The school has a very useful policy for the subject, which offers helpful guidance to teachers. This, along with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority documentation, ensures the teaching of skills and knowledge is balanced and progressive across the school. Pupils have a good attitude towards art: they concentrate well, take a pride in their work and handle materials with care.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106. Little teaching of design and technology was observed during the inspection. There was, however, evidence available of work undertaken prior to the inspection. Discussions with pupils indicated they had satisfactory knowledge of design and technology and were making satisfactory progress. The previous inspection had judged design technology to be a key issue as attainment was below average at the end of both key stages and progress was unsatisfactory. The school has made significant progress in addressing this key issue.
107. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are able to design and plan items for a specific purpose, selecting appropriate materials. Some very good work is to be seen in Year 1, where pupils plan, design and carefully construct playground equipment using materials such as dowel, straws, netting, card, pipe cleaners and wire. In the

reception class, pupils construct models using boxes of varying sizes. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to plan and design for a range of purposes. A good example is seen in Year 6, where pupils make mittens using fabrics. In this lesson, pupils make very good progress learning new skills and techniques in sewing, and learn about the properties of different fabrics and their suitability for different purposes.

108. Design technology is included in teachers' planning and is clearly linked to other areas of the curriculum, for example, where pupils construct Tudor style houses. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory and the developing use of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority documentation should ensure pupils experience the full range of design and technology. The policy for design technology is to be reviewed to include detailed guidance to assist teachers.

GEOGRAPHY

109. Standards at the end of both key stages are average for pupils' ages. This judgement is based on the two lessons observed during the inspection and also on the analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussion with teachers and pupils. This judgement shows an improvement at the end of Key Stage 2 where it was found to be unsatisfactory at the school's previous inspection.
110. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to use a range of geographical questions in their research activities. They identify features on a world map such as mountain ranges and wet and dry places. On a local area map they identify water by place names and features. They use the Internet and CD-ROM to find information and use appropriate vocabulary to communicate their findings. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils showed above average awareness of environmental impact after their visit to Chasewater nature reserve. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils could appropriately describe and compare the physical and human features of Llangollen and Brownhills.
111. By the end of Year 2, pupils carry out a traffic count and show their results in graphs and charts, making effective use of skills learnt in mathematics. From an imaginary map from the story "The Isle of Struay", they identify and compare features with Brownhills. They identify a variety of seaside places around the world and give reasons for their popularity. They compare these features with their home area and express views on attractive and unattractive environmental features.
112. There were not sufficient lessons seen to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning. In the lessons seen in Year 3 and in Year 5, teaching and learning were good. An analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning shows that pupils develop their skills appropriately through specific teaching, and by being given the opportunities to apply their skills. They have an increasing understanding of their own area and are given good opportunities to make comparisons with other localities through a range of visits. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developed appropriately.
113. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of his role. He monitors teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work, but has not yet had opportunity to monitor teaching. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development when they learn about life in other countries, and to their moral development when they consider environmental issues. Since the last inspection, pupils are more involved in enquiry based work.

HISTORY

114. There were limited opportunities to observe lessons during the inspection. Judgements are made on these few lessons, discussions with staff and an analysis of previous work.
115. As a result of good quality teaching and learning, standards of attainment in Year 6 are above those found in other schools. In their study of World War II, pupils learn how to find out about the experiences and feelings of evacuees from a wide range of information sources. They communicate their learning in an organised way using accurate vocabulary such as evacuee, billeting officer, ration book, clothing coupons and identity cards. The teacher sensitively develops empathy and understanding of how evacuees in Britain and in continental Europe must have felt and pupils learn of the power of propaganda. They make good use of literature to find out about and share the feelings of the people involved through their reading of "Goodnight Mr. Tom". This shows a significant improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, where pupils in Key Stage 2 were judged to have *"little understanding of the past"* and were *"unable to communicate knowledge in a structured way"*.
116. Across the rest of the school pupils, show broadly average knowledge, understanding and skills of historical enquiry. Again, this shows an improvement on the previous report where pupils' progress and standards were found to be unsatisfactory at both key stages. In Year 2, they are beginning to use everyday terms relating to the passage of time and show an increasing sense of chronology. They identify features of homes and describe and handle household objects of the past. They have used newspapers from the 1930s to find out about the Brownhills Colliery disaster and have written their own reports, linked to factual writing in literacy.
117. In the lessons seen, teaching and learning are at least satisfactory overall. In a Year 2 lesson they were good, and in Year 6, very good. The teacher in Year 6 has excellent relationships with the class and manages pupils very well. These factors lead to a very good working environment where pupils are attentive, concentrate well and enjoy finding out about the past. She has very good knowledge of the period and provides good artefacts. Other evidence indicates that teachers have sound knowledge and understanding of the subject and have appropriate expectations of pupils. They plan their lessons well and generally make sound use of time and resources. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress across the school with more rapid progress in Years 2 and 6.
118. The curriculum is carefully planned against national guidelines to ensure pupils systematically build on what they have learned. The quality of the display to support the subject is good across the school.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

119. Information and communication technology is an improving aspect of the school's work. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were judged to be in line with national expectations. With the commitment by the staff to improving their own skills and the improvements in facilities in the school, standards have risen and are now above what is expected of pupils by the time they are seven and eleven.
120. There are a number of reasons for these improvements. The knowledge and

commitment of the subject co-ordinator, the expertise of the teachers, the thought given to providing a suitable curriculum and regular good quality teaching and learning all contribute to raising standards. All classes have regular access to computers and timetabled lessons in the computer suite provide all pupils with effective teaching and learning. The way in which pupils in Year 3 learned to take pictures from one program and insert them correctly into newspaper articles they were writing during the course of a forty minute lesson demonstrates how, with good teaching, they quickly and effectively learn to apply new skills. This good progress in learning does not rely on pupils having access to their own computer at home, but is carefully planned to give all pupils equality of opportunity.

121. While the limited number of computers does not allow everyone to use them at the same time, the way lessons are planned ensures that those not working directly on the computers have worthwhile pencil and paper tasks that relate to the work they have done or will be doing. In this way, the skills they need are constantly being reinforced and extended. This works well because of the very positive attitudes of the pupils who co-operate and help each other and share resources, knowing that they will all have an equal amount of time at the keyboard.
122. The overall scheme of work ensures good coverage of almost all of the required strands of the curriculum. These are developed and extended as pupils move through the school. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 program a floor robot to follow a series of directions they have worked out, while pupils in Year 4 successfully plot a more complicated route for a 'screen turtle' on the computer. Where some strands are less effectively covered, the co-ordinator is working to improve the facilities for these, for example, monitoring events in science. Nevertheless, pupils of all ages can communicate through information technology using databases to sort and display information, use word processing for drafting and writing in English, or search for information using CD-ROMs or the Internet. Links have been established with other schools, including those in other countries, and pupils exchange e-mail with their 'pen pals'. Evidence of good quality work in all aspects can be found in pupils' books, project folders and in displays around the school.
123. The one aspect that prevents pupils making even better progress is the quality of the computer hardware and software. Teachers use the digital projector linked to one of the newer computers very effectively to teach new skills, although the poor quality of the screen used does somewhat spoil the impact as it is often difficult to see, particularly in bright conditions. However, it is the variation in computers and systems in the computer suite that make teaching and learning more difficult as teachers often have to provide two explanations for the tasks because of the two different systems in use. This makes unnecessary work and although pupils make good progress in information technology, it is because of the quality of the teaching and their own commitment rather than the equipment. The subject co-ordinator is well aware of the restrictions this places on teaching and learning and plans carefully to limit its impact.

MUSIC

124. Pupils' level of understanding of music at both key stages is in line that expected for their age, and progress is satisfactory for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. By the end of the Key Stage 1, pupils sing with enthusiasm from a good range of hymns and songs. They practise different rhythmic patterns and add actions to the songs they sing. A good example of this was seen in reception class,

where pupils listened to ticking clocks and performed the action of the pendulum when following the teacher's conducting. Pupils are able to explore the sounds made by percussion instruments and can name many of them. Opportunities are provided for pupils to compose music together and follow a pictorial score. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils sing enthusiastically in assembly, and although diction is good, pitch is not as well developed. In lessons, pupils enjoy achieving specific effects using percussion instruments: for example, in one class they attempt to create hot and humid sounds. Pupils are given opportunities to explore and listen to music from other cultures. In Year 6, pupils listen to music, identifying sounds and creating effects of royalty and stateliness by developing crescendo. They learn that beat is important and mood and feelings can be determined through music. In lessons and assemblies, pupils hear a satisfactory range of music and are building an appropriate repertoire.

125. Only three lessons were observed and teaching is satisfactory overall. The teachers generally have a secure musical knowledge and are usually confident in teaching the subject. Although pupils have the opportunity to sing together, there is less of a focus on improving the quality of singing across the school. In one lesson, a challenging task was presented to pupils without considering how musical ideas should be taught and could have been developed further. On occasions, groups of musicians visit the school to help pupils develop a better understanding of music. Lessons are generally well planned and teachers are very enthusiastic, which has a positive impact on behaviour. A very good example of this is seen in Year 6, where teaching is very good.
126. The profile of music is being developed throughout the school. The co-ordinator has specialist knowledge and is eager to widen the musical skills of as many pupils as possible by extending extra-curricular activities. She also plans to develop opportunities for pupils to listen to visiting orchestras. The current scheme of work in conjunction with guidance provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, allows teachers to plan and teach skills at the correct level and progressively across the school. Music makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to other areas of the curriculum. This was an issue at the time of the last inspection and has now successfully been addressed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

127. The appointment of a co-ordinator with a qualification in sports science has given the subject a higher status, which is reflected in both the improved curriculum and the wide range of activities offered to pupils after school. Staff training by the co-ordinator has been helpful and supportive to teachers, and this is reflected in the level of interest shown by pupils and the improvements seen in standards, although at present there is little opportunity for the co-ordinator to observe other teachers in lessons. From unsatisfactory and sometimes poor standards of attainment in Key Stage 2 at the time of the previous report, pupils now make satisfactory progress and achieve in line with what is expected for pupils of this age. This improvement can be seen at all ages. The recurrent theme of the previous report was the low expectations of the teachers and the amount of time wasted by pupils sitting and waiting their turn. These weaknesses have been addressed.
128. There is a good range of equipment available through the Top Sport and Top Team activities, and the way these are used provides pupils with a variety of good quality games and activities and the chance to develop both independent and team skills.

The previous scheme of work, modified by the co-ordinator, is being brought into line with guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The small side team games and apparatus work, along with swimming and athletics, are the foci of the curriculum for this term. The swimming elements of the programme have also been improved and by the time the leave school at eleven, the great majority of pupils are able to swim at least the required 25 metres. The one area that is currently underdeveloped is in dance, and little in the way of planned dance takes place after Year 4.

129. Pupils show a keenness to take part in physical education and teachers use this enthusiasm well. Just occasionally, however, this enthusiasm leads to some loss of concentration, but for the vast majority of the time pupils' behaviour is very good. Teaching is satisfactory and teachers' planning for the sports and games activities is suitably detailed and provides for pupils of all abilities. Where there is sometimes a weakness is when too much choice is given to pupils when selecting equipment. The younger pupils in particular are not always able to select for themselves the most appropriate equipment for the task, which can lead to them wasting time while they change and try others. The result of this is that teachers are not always able to teach pupils the skills they need: for example, when using bats and balls, those chosen by some pupils were not suitable for the task and learning the correct techniques was almost impossible for these pupils.
130. The hall is of a suitable size for most gymnastic lessons and provides a good surface, although it is less suitable with large classes of older pupils. The school grounds, however, provide good facilities both for a hard surface play area and a good school field marked out for a range of sporting activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

131. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, attain standards that meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages. This is similar to the judgements of the previous inspection.
132. Pupils develop an appropriate understanding and knowledge of the beliefs, symbols and traditions of the world's great faiths. Older pupils are given a range of useful opportunities to compare aspects of other religions with Christianity. In Year 6, they have recently visited St. James' Church in Brownhills, and the Birmingham Progressive Synagogue. They have sound knowledge of the key artefacts of both places of worship and clearly identify similarities and differences. They understand the importance of prayer and the Holy Books of both faiths. They have a satisfactory understanding of the New Testament and the life of Jesus. They know about the disciples and why Jesus used the parables to help people to understand about God. They express their ideas and feelings sensitively about suffering, love, compassion and the wonders of the world. This is particularly evident in the Year 6 study of World War II.
133. By Year 2, pupils name people, artefacts religious practices and festivals such as harvest. They identify favourite things at church and relate religious stories such as Daniel in the lion's den. They say what is important in their own lives when thinking about the family.
134. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall at both key stages, and very good in Year 6. This shows an improvement since the previous inspection, where

teaching was judged to be sound in Key Stage 1 and, despite satisfactory progress, teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2.

135. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject, which they share well with the pupils to move them forward in their learning. They impart a feeling of sensitivity and respect for all religions, to which the pupils respond well. Strengths in the teaching of the subject were particularly evident in Year 2 and the oldest three classes. Planning was careful and addressed the pupils' needs well. The good rapport between the teachers and pupils enabled pupils to feel confident to explore and express their ideas. Pupils were very attentive and were engrossed in their learning. In these lessons, the teachers' calm, respectful approach and high expectations of behaviour and quality of work led to a very productive response from pupils, who made good gains in their knowledge and skills. Speaking and listening skills are extended appropriately in the subject. In Year 4, for example, pupils discuss the similarities and differences between a Christian and Hindu wedding and extend their religious vocabulary.
136. The co-ordinator is specialist trained in the subject and provides good support for the staff. She monitors the subject through looking at teachers' planning and pupils' work. Religious education makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development as it provides good opportunities for pupils to discuss and reflect on a range of issues.