

# INSPECTION REPORT

**NELSON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103237

Headteacher: Mrs F Brewster

Reporting inspector: Lynne Wright  
22398

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

Inspection number: 208870

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary (Nursery Class)
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	King Edwards Road Ladywood Birmingham
Postcode:	B1 2 PJ
Telephone number:	0121 236 2201
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Miss S Hendley
Date of previous inspection:	16 <sup>th</sup> – 19 <sup>th</sup> November 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22398	Lynne Wright	Registered inspector	Design and Technology, ICT, Equal Opportunities.	What sort of school it is. The school's results and achievements. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well the pupils are taught. What the school should do to improve further.
9056	Valerie Cain	Lay inspector		How well the school cares for its pupils. How well the school works in partnership with parents.
31334	Barbara Atcheson	Team inspector	Mathematics, Religious Education, Physical Education.	The quality of the curricular opportunities offered to pupils.
20932	Tim Boyce	Team inspector	History, Geography	
4262	Tony Taylor	Team inspector	Science, Music, The Foundation Stage.	How well the school is led and managed.
11704	Peter Williman	Team inspector	English, Art, Special Educational Needs, English as an additional language.	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Nelson Primary School is situated in Birmingham city centre, and serves a diverse multi-ethnic community. Many pupils come from socially and economically disadvantaged homes. The area is undergoing an intense phase of redevelopment and pupil numbers have fallen considerably over the past few years, so that the school is under-subscribed. It is smaller than other primary schools, with 171 boys and girls, from 3 – 11, on roll. Of these, 62 are under six, 39 of whom attend the nursery full time. A very high proportion of pupils is from ethnic minority backgrounds. Just over half are of African Caribbean heritage, a very high proportion in comparison with schools nationally. A small proportion of the pupils speak English as an additional language. The school receives additional funding through ‘Excellence in Cities’. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The percentage of pupils on the school’s register of special educational needs broadly matches the national average, but the number with a statement of need is low. Attainment on entry to the school covers a wide range, but is below average overall. The number of pupils entering or leaving the school, other than in the reception or Year 6 class, is very high – 32 per cent last year.

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

This has become an effective school, largely through the very good leadership of the headteacher. She and her deputy have worked hard to address significant weaknesses and to bring about steady improvement in the quality of learning activities and consistency in teaching. Teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is very good, so that they make very good progress. It is satisfactory at Key Stages 1 and 2. By the time the pupils leave the school they attain below the expected standards in English, mathematics and science. Very few pupils achieve higher standards but the school has introduced strategies to remedy both this, and the underachievement of boys compared to that of the girls. Overall, progress is satisfactory. Progress in music is good throughout the school. In curriculum areas yet to be developed, learning is still unsatisfactory. Pupils have positive attitudes to school, and although attendance remains below average nationally, it is improving slowly. Although there has been good improvement in many aspects of the school’s work, the school has a large deficit budget. Currently there are no formal plans to address this and so, overall, the school gives unsatisfactory value for money.

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

- Very good teaching in the Foundation Stage enables the children to make very good progress.
- Very good systems for promoting good behaviour are improving pupils’ self-esteem and self-control.
- The head and deputy headteacher are a very strong management team with a clear focus on school improvement.
- The school has a very strong commitment to the value it places on each pupil so that they all have equal access to learning and the opportunity to do well.
- Provision for the pupils’ moral and social development is good, so that the school is helping them to get along with each other and to become responsible members of the school community.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 are not high enough; standards in mathematics at Key Stage 1 are not high enough.
- Standards at Key Stages 1 and 2 are not high enough in most other subjects, because the curriculum lacks the breadth and depth to ensure that pupils develop skills, knowledge and understanding to the expected levels.
- Ways of assessing what pupils have learned, and the progress they have made, are unsatisfactory.
- Formal methods of determining the effectiveness of teaching in non-core subjects are not developed enough.
- The governing body does not fulfil its responsibilities well, and their control of financial management is unsatisfactory.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1998, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Improvement has been satisfactory overall, although in the short time the present headteacher has been in post there has been rapid improvement, and the school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues of the last report. The school improvement plan sets priorities for development clearly, with the expressed aim of raising pupils' attainment through the setting of achievement targets, and through a systematic programme of staff development. Consequently, most pupils at Key Stage 2 have made better progress since September, in English, mathematics and science. There is a performance management system in place which enables staff and school managers to review and develop their work. The school's administrative systems have been reorganised so that the headteacher can focus on her leadership and management roles. The quality of teaching has improved at Key Stages 1 and 2, with fewer unsatisfactory lessons, although it is still not sufficiently consistent. However, there has been no improvement in the effective use of homework at Key Stage 2. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is now satisfactory, largely through the use of relevant themes that aid reflection. Teachers' levels of expertise in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education (RE) are improving. This is reflected in satisfactory rates of progress in RE, and in ICT at Key Stage 1. The school has taken very effective action to improve provision in music and standards are now good at both key stages. There has been unsatisfactory improvement in the development of most non-core curriculum areas because the school's priority has been on raising standards in the core subjects. Systems to monitor individual pupils' progress effectively throughout the school remain insufficiently developed in most subjects. As a result, standards remain low. However, the enhanced management role of the deputy headteacher and subject co-ordinators is enabling them to plan for improvements in their subjects. The school has good capacity to succeed in the future.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools		similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	E*	E	D
mathematics	E*	E*	E*	E*
science	E*	E*	E*	E

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

The results of end of Key Stage 2 tests in English were well below average nationally, and below the average for similar schools. In mathematics and science, results were in the lowest 5% nationally. When compared to similar schools, results were very low in mathematics, and well below average in science. The school was successful in meeting its target in English, but not in mathematics. There have been fluctuations in results over time, largely due to the high number of pupils who enter or leave the school between reception and Year 6, and also because of high staff absence. The inspection finds that standards in all three subjects are currently below expectations at Key Stage 2. They are also below in mathematics at Key Stage 1. In English and science they match expectations. Pupils are making steady progress, with the exception of science in Years 5 and 6. They make particularly good progress in music. However, standards are still below expectations in religious education, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, and information and communication technology at Key Stage 2. The school shows increased expectations in its target setting for all pupils, especially higher attainers. The upward trend in results at Key Stage 1 over the past five years is steeper than that nationally. At Key Stage 2 it is below the national trend, but rose above it in 2000.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are satisfactory. Most are keen to come to school. Many have difficulty in concentrating in lessons, despite the best efforts of their teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils, especially the oldest, are developing a good understanding of the effects of their behaviour on others and their own future.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. It is very good for children in the nursery and reception classes, where relationships are very good. Elsewhere they are satisfactory.
Attendance	Despite the strenuous efforts the school makes to promote good attendance, it remains below average, although rates are improving steadily.

This aspect is improving steadily, and reflects the importance that the school places upon developing positive attitudes to learning in order to raise standards throughout the school. Pupils continue to be excluded, as the school is consistently strict, but fair, in its application of the behaviour policy. All pupils are very clear about the school's high expectations of their attitudes to school and their behaviour.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Of the forty-three lessons seen during the inspection, 93 per cent were satisfactory or better; of these, 32 per cent were good, with 21 per cent judged to be very good or better. Seven per cent of lessons seen were unsatisfactory. There is inconsistency in teaching in some subjects and by some teachers. Where teaching uses individual strengths and knowledge, it is very good. Where teaching is less effective there is variable pace and a lack of challenge for all pupils. Teaching of literacy and numeracy are satisfactory, although opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in other subjects are limited. Teachers' management of their pupils, and their use of support staff to help them learn, is good. However, in many other subjects teaching is often unsatisfactory, as it does not cover the whole range of the teaching programme in sufficient depth and pupils' progress is, consequently, unsatisfactory. Learning is adversely affected by the short attention span of many pupils, and by the fact that a high number of pupils have come to the school part-way through their school life. Overall, therefore, teaching is satisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is interesting, varied and of very good quality. Elsewhere it is unsatisfactory as it does not provide sufficient depth and range for pupils to develop skills to the expected levels. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.



Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good. Satisfactory education plans are in place and reviewed regularly; these systems are being refined and improved with beneficial effect on the teaching and progress of the pupils. Management of pupils with behavioural difficulties is very good and projects aimed at raising pupils' self-esteem are beginning to make a positive difference.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is satisfactory, enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. The school's aims and actions to raise achievement through improved behaviour and relationships promotes moral and social development well. Spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has effective informal systems to check on pupils' personal development. There are very good systems for promoting good behaviour. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good. The procedures for assessing and monitoring academic performance are unsatisfactory and there is insufficient information in most subjects to guide curriculum planning effectively.

Generally, parents have positive views of the school. The school makes good efforts at informing and involving the parents. Information provided by the school is of good quality, especially in the Foundation Stage. However, despite the school's efforts, many parents do not support the work of the school by helping their children's learning at home or by actively helping in school.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The head and deputy headteacher have a very clear vision for the development of the school and have worked hard to translate it into effective action that has addressed most of the previous weaknesses. There is a strong, shared commitment to provide high quality education for all the pupils, whatever their abilities and needs. Co-ordinators have begun to play their part in shaping the direction of the school, but the role still has a long way to develop.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is ineffective. Governors have a poor understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and do not play an active part in planning for improvement. They do not fulfil their statutory duties.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Sound systems are in place. The school improvement plan provides a clear agenda for action and enables efforts to be directed to priorities that focus strongly on raising standards. The headteacher has been pivotal in this process since taking up her appointment in September.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of specific grants and other funds. Financial management is still developing, but at present it is unsatisfactory, as there is a large deficit budget. There is a need to tighten financial control. The headteacher is fully aware of this, and the need to ensure value for money is obtained in terms of raised standards. The school's application of the principles of best value is unsatisfactory.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• They are well taught and make good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some parents feel their children do not get the right amount of homework.</li> </ul>

<p>progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Parents would feel confident to approach the school with questions and problems.</li> <li>• The school expects pupils to work hard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are not given enough information about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• The school does not work closely enough with parents.</li> <li>• Not enough activities are provided outside lessons.</li> </ul>
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While the inspection team broadly agrees with the positive views expressed by parents, it cannot fully support them. Teaching is sound and pupils make satisfactory progress overall, and behaviour is satisfactory. The inspection team agrees with parents that pupils' reports could be improved. However, the school works hard to involve parents, and make them welcome. There is a satisfactory range of activities provided outside lessons. The amount of homework given, and its frequency, is inconsistent at Key Stage 2.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. There is a range of attainment amongst the children who join the school in the Nursery class, but generally it is below the average compared with what is expected nationally. The children tend to be articulate but do not readily express their thoughts. Many find difficulty in sustaining interest and persevering in a task. At the beginning of the reception class, inspection evidence indicates that, overall, attainment matches that expected nationally. Highly skilled and consistent teaching, within a very well-planned and interesting curriculum enables the children to make very good progress in all areas of learning, irrespective of their prior attainment, gender, ethnicity or social circumstances. Targets set for groups and individuals ensure that each child is helped to become independent and purposeful in their approach to learning. By the time they start Year 1, most children have achieved the early learning goals expected nationally for children of this age, in every aspect of their learning. They are particularly successful in developing their personal and social skills.
2. The results of the end of Key Stage 1 national tests and assessments for 2000, in reading, writing, mathematics and science were well above the national average, and in comparison with schools in similar social circumstances. At the higher level, (Level 3), performance in reading was below the national average. It was well above in writing and close to the national average in science. When compared to similar schools, performance at the higher levels was very high. The pupils' performance in mathematics was particularly strong as all pupils achieved at the higher level. These test results show a dramatic improvement from the low standards of the last three years and at the time of the previous inspection. However, this was a very small cohort and no pupils had special educational needs. The results show that these pupils made very rapid progress in attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress of boys was particularly remarkable, as they started from a lower base than the girls. There is now little difference in the performance of boys and girls, largely as a result of the school's monitoring, and action the school has taken to remedy this imbalance through projects such as the raising of self-esteem of African-Caribbean boys. Trends show a continued upward path.
3. Last year's cohort was unusually able in this school, and nationally. Inspection evidence shows that attainment at Year 2 matches national expectations in English, and science. It is below expectations in mathematics. The literacy strategy has enabled pupils to make satisfactory progress at the end of the key stage, especially in writing. The range of reading skills is slightly lower than usually found at this age, as phonic skills are not sufficiently well developed to enable the pupils to respond quickly to unfamiliar words. Progress in science is satisfactory. Key skills are firmly established within sound science knowledge and understanding. Learning in mathematics is satisfactory, despite some good teaching seen during the inspection, as many pupils have yet to establish sound learning patterns.
4. Pupils' performance in end of Key Stage 2 tests has fluctuated between 1996 to 2000, but overall boys do less well than girls. As a result recent staff training and school initiatives have focused on raising the attainment of boys, particularly those of African Caribbean heritage. Trends show that standards remain well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. The results of end of Key Stage 2 assessments in 2000 show that performance overall was very low compared with the national average and that of similar schools. It was well below average in English, and very low in mathematics and science. The target for expected attainment in English was just exceeded, but fell short for mathematics. Improvements in attainment were greater in science as the school has adopted a more structured approach to teaching it. These very low standards indicate historical underachievement of African Caribbean boys, and they are compounded by the very high mobility rate of pupils, and frequent staff absence. The present

headteacher has the raising of standards as the overarching aim of the school and first priority for development. She has been very active in acquiring funds to promote projects aimed at raising the achievement of all pupils, but has targeted those with particular need, particularly African Caribbean boys, and those at risk of exclusion because of challenging behaviour or poor attitudes to school. Although targets set for future attainment are still low, they show increased expectations at both key stages across the core subjects. Special classes aimed to boost the achievement of older pupils in English and mathematics are successfully improving the performance of higher-attaining pupils. Targets set for these pupils, generally those who have been in the school the longest, show much higher expectations, although they still fall short of the national average.

5. Inspection evidence shows that attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is below average in English, mathematics and science. Although standards are low, pupils' work shows a marked improvement since September, when the present head arrived and initiated projects to raise expectations and attainment. Standards have risen since the previous inspection, but the very high turnover of pupils slows the rate at which improvement can be made.
6. At Year 6, the quality of writing of pupils of all levels of attainment, whilst still unsatisfactory, has improved significantly since September and most pupils are able to develop a structured argument for and against topical issues such as fox hunting. In reading pupils' use of known words, and the good match of texts to current skills ensures steady progress, but this progress is limited by restricted decoding and comprehension skills, and standards are below expectations. Higher order reading skills, such as the retrieval of information from texts are not developed well enough.
7. Standards in speaking and listening have improved at both key stages since the last inspection, when they were well below expectations. They now match expectations, as the school provides experiences in different situations for pupils to develop conversational skills, such as in personal development sessions, and explanatory skills, as in literacy and numeracy lessons. Handwriting standards are unsatisfactory across the school, with the exception of Year 5. Here, the teacher has high expectations and handwriting practice is a regular feature of homework. Elsewhere, there are some poor examples of adult handwriting and expectations of a fluent, cursive style are not high enough. Pupils are acquiring new skills and knowledge in mathematics at a satisfactory rate, but their knowledge of which number rule to apply in solving problems is insecure. Many lack the confidence to try their own methods to arrive at an answer. In science, standards dip to below those expected in Years 5 and 6 as teachers emphasise the knowledge aspects of the learning programme with fewer opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out investigations and experiments.
8. Music was identified as an area of particular weakness at the last inspection, as teachers were lacking in subject knowledge and expertise. Successful collaboration with the LEA has resulted in increased staff and pupil confidence, and all round improvements in planning, teaching and assessment. Consequently, pupils make good progress and achieve standards above those expected nationally. In physical education pupils' achievements are sound, and most reach standards that are close to those expected for their ages. Pupils' achievements in information and communication technology (ICT) are sound at Key Stage 1, where confident teaching across the whole learning programme enables the pupils to make satisfactory progress in their learning. This is an improvement on the previous inspection findings. At Key Stage 2 they make unsatisfactory progress because they have not had enough experience in using ICT for data handling, creating sequences of instructions to control events, and using simulations to explore questions. As a result, standards of attainment are below expectations.
9. Attainment in religious education, design and technology, geography and history is below expectations at both key stages, matching the findings of the previous inspection. It is unsatisfactory in art at Key Stage 1 and poor at Key Stage 2, showing a decline in standards. Pupils' progress is, therefore, largely unsatisfactory. There has been unsatisfactory improvement

in these subjects since the last inspection, because co-ordination of the subjects remains unsatisfactory. The curriculum in these areas remains incoherent and 'bitty' so that the pupils do not have well-structured experiences that build on each other. School priorities are to raise standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and to address the Key Issues from the previous inspection. Given that there are many areas where improvement are needed, these priorities are well-focused and are being implemented to good effect.

10. Pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers and make satisfactory progress in relation to their initial attainment.

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

11. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are satisfactory and contribute positively to the quality of the pupils' personal behaviour and to their learning. Although standards remain similar to those found at the previous inspection, there have been many subtle and significant improvements, and developments reflect the importance and emphasis given to it by the school. The headteacher's decision to target this area as a high priority is beginning to pay off. Every pupil is valued, and shown to be so. Great efforts have been directed towards ensuring that all groups of pupils are helped to behave well and to assume increasing responsibility for their own actions, through raising their self-esteem and self-awareness. Pupils' understanding of the impact of their actions on others is good, and developing.
12. Through particular initiatives such as circle time, when pupils are helped to share their thoughts and feelings in a supportive atmosphere, most pupils are developing self-confidence effectively. Older pupils are able to identify and share their successes with their class. They are learning to listen to, and respect other viewpoints and to accept advice, as when the Year 6 class discussed five pieces of advice they would offer friends when working. Parents have noted an improvement in their children's attitudes to school and the majority feels the school is helping them to become mature and responsible. This is particularly evident in Year 6, where a group of pupils who have all been excluded from school at some time, said they realise the school is 'helping us grow up' and that 'messing about doesn't get us a good education'. School initiatives aimed at improving the self-control of older pupils' and those identified as at risk of exclusion are having a steady and positive effect. By working to raise self-esteem, especially of African Caribbean boys, the pupils are becoming very clear about the consequences of their actions and are trying very hard to improve their attitudes and behaviour through keeping their own records up to date and trying to achieve their own targets.
13. Many pupils enter the nursery with poorly developed skills in expressing themselves and in sustaining interest and concentration in the activities they are involved in. The very strong relationships established between staff and children in a relaxed and informal environment, and very good planning for the children's learning, enables them to make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They quickly become confident in working independently, sharing happily and remaining interested in what they are doing over sustained periods of time. Their behaviour is very good; they listen to each other and are beginning to appreciate that other children have needs and rights as well. By the end of the Foundation Stage most achieve the early learning goals set for children of this age.
14. At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' attitudes towards school are satisfactory. Although the attendance rate is unsatisfactory, remaining below the national average, and rates of unauthorised absence are above the national average, there has been a steady improvement since September. This reflects the pupils' improving attitudes towards school since the present headteacher took up her post. Most pupils reflect the positive attitudes to learning promoted by most teachers. The majority of pupils show an interest in what they do, both in lessons and in other activities provided for them. They generally settle quickly to their work, concentrate on the task and try hard, especially where this is a firm expectation of the teacher. However, these attitudes are not

consistently satisfactory. Pupils' concentration tends to drift and many of them do not pay close and sustained attention despite the best efforts of their teachers most of the time. Also some pupils, mostly boys, have great difficulty in controlling their emotions and behaviour and this effects adversely the progress they make in lessons. The clearly expressed expectation of the school that all pupils will try their best at all times, and the consistency with which the behaviour code is applied, are steadily making an impression and pupils are responding positively.

15. Parents note an improvement in the behaviour of their children in school since September, when the present headteacher took over. Good behaviour is a firm expectation in all aspects of school life. However, in some classes, groups of pupils react strongly to changes in routines, circumstances or teaching approaches and this sometimes leads to unsatisfactory learning. Most pupils play together amicably during playtimes and lunchtimes, and although play is often boisterous, it does not contain elements of bullying or deliberate unkindness. The school has a number of pupils who experience behavioural and emotional difficulties, some of them severe. This leads to pupils being excluded when they are unable to control their behaviour. The exclusion policy is applied very strictly and fairly. The pupils recognise this and are well aware of why they are being excluded. Excluded pupils are given very strong support on their return to school and are given a 'clean slate' so that their exclusion does not determine the treatment they are given, and they are treated equally to the other pupils. The school is not prepared to tolerate any breaches in its expectations of what is acceptable behaviour. These expectations have risen sharply since September. There have been no permanent exclusions in the past year.
16. Most pupils form sound relationships with each other, most teachers and other adults. Many pupils approach adults confidently to start a conversation and enjoy the interaction. They have quickly formed a trusting relationship with the consultant for personal development and are willing to talk about their innermost thoughts. During class reflection periods they show suitable respect for what is being said and are willing to contribute to discussions on the theme. Most staff are consistently polite, helpful, fair and firm with the pupils and provide good role models. The pupils are expected increasingly to take responsibility for organising their own learning, so that they do not automatically ask the teacher if they do not know what to do.

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

17. Much of the teaching seen during the inspection was good, but overall the quality is satisfactory. Almost all the lessons were judged to be at least satisfactory. Forty per cent were judged to be satisfactory, thirty two per cent good, and nineteen per cent very good. One lesson (2%) was excellent. Only three lessons (7%) were of unsatisfactory quality. This is a marked improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when one in eight lessons was judged unsatisfactory. However there are great inconsistencies in teaching at both key stages amongst teachers and within subjects, which has an effect on the standards pupils achieve in lessons and over time. Work in pupils' books shows that, in many subjects, teaching is often unsatisfactory, because it does not cover the whole range of the teaching programme in sufficient depth. Pupils' progress is, consequently, unsatisfactory.
18. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is a particular strength of the school, and over half (58%) of teaching was either good or very good. Teaching was never less than good in the nursery classes. In the reception class teaching was at least satisfactory, with some good features. As a result, pupils in the Foundation Stage learn quickly and make very good progress across most areas of learning, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. From the start, the children are encouraged to work independently in a wide range of planned and purposeful activities, such as washing up after cooking or using the computer to recognise letter shapes. All staff are very dedicated and make every effort to make learning interesting and fun. Resourceful and imaginative teaching is based firmly upon a unified approach to planning for the pupils' learning. The Foundation Stage curriculum is implemented thoroughly and assessments are used

rigorously to plan the next stage in each child's learning, according to identified need. This results in pupils making good progress overall in their learning, and they work and learn effectively. The good teaching observed at the previous inspection has been strengthened and is now of consistently higher quality. Teaching in lessons seen was satisfactory at Key Stage 1. However there were inconsistencies in teaching and the quality of teaching varied from very good to unsatisfactory. It was more consistent in Year 1. Homework is set regularly and supports the work in lessons.

19. Much teaching observed at Key Stage 2 was good. Some of the better teaching was from teachers with specialist knowledge, such as the consultant brought in by the school to teach sessions aimed at enhancing pupils' self-esteem and self-knowledge, or in small groups where targeted pupils were given a boost to their learning by increasing the expectations of them. However, there were similar inconsistencies in teaching to those seen at Key Stage 1. The work in pupils' books, teachers' lesson plans and records indicate that teaching over time is satisfactory at Key Stage 2. The setting of homework is inconsistent and does not fulfil the intentions of the home-school agreement. It does not add significantly to pupils' learning, as feedback is minimal. Parents' views are justified and there has been little improvement in this since the previous inspection.
20. Teaching is satisfactory in English, mathematics, science, religious education (RE) and physical education (PE) at both key stages. It is satisfactory in information and communication technology (ICT) at Key Stage 1. School priorities have been to improve teaching and to raise standards of learning and achievement in these subjects in order to address the Key Issues from the previous inspection. Pupils' learning and rate of progress is satisfactory in mathematics, RE and PE at both key stages and in science up to the end of Year 4. Learning is unsatisfactory, through Key Stage 2, in English and ICT at Key Stage 2. However, a large number of pupils enter and leave the school partway through each year, so that many of them were not in Key Stage 1 at this school. In science learning is unsatisfactory in Years 5 and 6 as time given to teaching the investigative element is greatly reduced. Over time, teaching is unsatisfactory at both key stages in art and design, design and technology, geography and history, and in ICT at Key Stage 2. Teaching of individual lessons observed in these subjects was often satisfactory, and sometimes good. However, the teachers' lack subject knowledge across the curriculum in these subjects. Curriculum and lesson plans make insufficient attempts to match the content taught to the needs of individual pupils, who often do not know the purpose of what they are doing in these subjects. Although pupils make satisfactory, and sometimes good progress in some lessons in these subjects, overall their learning is unsatisfactory as the teaching does not build progressively on what they had previously been taught. The developing threads of pupils' learning are slowed, as they do not always have the skills, knowledge and understanding to build upon what they already know and can do, and so make unsatisfactory progress. In response to the previous inspection report, teaching in music has improved significantly, and is now good. All teachers share the responsibility for teaching music and they are supported by a committed co-ordinator. As a result, pupils' learning in music has improved, and is now good.
21. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory overall. The pupils are not taught a sufficient range of ways of working out how to read unfamiliar words and this hinders better progress in reading. Numeracy skills are taught thoroughly, but lesson planning is still not closely enough matched to the National Numeracy Strategy and opportunities are missed to develop all aspects of the mathematics curriculum equally effectively.
22. Where there is very good teaching, lessons are well-planned and structured and teachers' high expectations of pupils' effort and learning are made clear throughout. The pace of the lessons moves pupils learning on rapidly. A Year 6 literacy lesson, aimed at raising the achievement of African Caribbean boys, was interesting to them as it focused on persuasive arguments for why corporal punishment should not be used in schools. The teacher's sociable and supportive attitude drew the pupils quickly into the lesson and set a good tone for learning. Her expectations that all

pupils would contribute fully to the lesson, and do their best, were not disappointed. Her rigorous questioning extended their thinking by challenging their arguments. Good teaching often results in good progress in individual lessons, but the very high number of pupils that leave the school or join part way through each year makes progress over time satisfactory overall, as many pupils have little continuity in their learning experiences. High staff absence contributes to the break in the threads of learning. Good teaching results from the teacher's emphatic, but low-key discipline which maintains the pace of the lesson, even when pupils are slow to settle. This helps the pupils to concentrate and learn effectively. This approach benefits boys especially, as they tend to have more challenging behaviour. Satisfactory teaching results from varied pace to the lessons, that on occasion gives pupils the opportunity to lose concentration. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the teacher's subject knowledge is limited and the lessons are slow to develop as class time is wasted on minor issues. The work is not well-suited to individuals' needs and pupils are not clear about what they are doing, and why.

23. A strength in the teaching is the teachers' overall management of all groups of pupils. They apply the behaviour code very rigorously and fairly, and consequently relationships are good. Good use is made of classroom assistants to support pupils experiencing difficulty, pupils with special educational need and those with English as an additional language, so that they achieve steadily. While there is still variation in the quality of teachers' lesson plans, as noted at the last inspection, the purposes of the learning are now stated clearly and usually shared with the pupils at the outset of the lesson. However, these are not always reviewed at the end of the lesson, and the pupils do not have a clear idea of how much they have progressed in their learning. Teachers' formal assessment of progress in lessons is unsatisfactory and here learning is not always developed effectively from lesson to lesson. The quality of teachers' marking varies from subject to subject, but is better in English and mathematics. There are some excellent examples of marking, notably in the literacy group taught by the deputy headteacher.

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

24. The curriculum for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is very good. It is very well planned to cover all areas of learning very effectively in an interesting, and frequently exciting, way. Activities within topics are very well structured to give the children a rich variety of stimulating experiences in formal and play situations, enabling most children to make very good progress in their learning as well as socially and emotionally. This is an improvement from the last inspection, when provision was judged good.
25. At the time of the previous inspection, curriculum provision was satisfactory at both key stages, with the exception of information technology and religious education which did not meet statutory requirements. Both information and communication technology and religious education now meet requirements, and the key issue from the previous inspection has been addressed. However, the overall quality and range of the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Teaching time for English is high, reflecting the school's priority of improving standards. As a result, teaching time for many other subjects has been 'squeezed' and so in these standards have not improved, and remain below expectations.
26. The school has prioritised carefully, areas for immediate curriculum development. Good support from the Local Education Authority, and the commitment of teachers to school initiatives, have brought about the necessary improvements identified in the previous inspection report. The music curriculum now supports good quality teaching and pupils' learning. The English, mathematics, science, religious education and physical education curriculum at both key stages, and the ICT curriculum at Key Stage 1, are satisfactory. They enable teachers to plan their lessons satisfactorily in order to develop the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in each subject, and make satisfactory provision for pupils' intellectual and physical development. The National



Numeracy and Literacy Strategies have been implemented satisfactorily and strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are sound. However, there is scope to use them more in other subjects.

27. The quality and range of the curriculum is unsatisfactory for ICT at Key Stage 2, and for art and design, design and technology, geography and history, at both key stages. These do not yet have priority in the school improvement plan. Themes are selected by each teacher to fit in with class topics, rather than a whole school plan that develops skills, knowledge and understanding as pupils move through the school. Consequently, pupils make unsatisfactory progress, as the threads of the learning often do not make a coherent picture. For example events in history are often taught without regard to where they fit on a time line, so that pupils cannot see connections between events and reasons why things happened.
28. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Satisfactory individual education plans are in place and regularly reviewed. These systems are being refined and improved with beneficial effect on the teaching and progress of the pupils. The school's very strong commitment to valuing every pupil equally is reflected in the way in which they all have equal access and opportunity within the curriculum, and are given every opportunity to succeed.
29. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health development is satisfactory, and is addressed mostly through science and physical education. However, there have been strong and successful recent developments, through well-structured class discussions and activities, aimed at heightening pupils' own thoughts and feelings. The school provides a satisfactory variety of extra-curricular activities that enhance the physical education, music and art programmes.
30. Provision for spiritual development has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Opportunities are given in class assemblies for pupils to reflect on issues that effect their lives, and what is important to them. The recently developed programme of themes ensures that these occasions are worthwhile. In one assembly, pupils were encouraged to think carefully about their response to the music. Pupils have some opportunity to wonder at their environment as when those in Year 5 took delight in demonstrating the detail of a flower pressing display.
31. The school's provision for moral development is good. Pupils respond well to the clear behaviour code and have a very clear idea of what is right and what is wrong. Older pupils express their appreciation of the fairness which the school's moral culture reflects. This stems from the commitment of the senior management team to demonstrate a firm, compassionate, but even-handed value system, which is applied effectively by almost all teachers. The school uses circle time lessons well to encourage pupils to consider personal issues and their responses to them. This initiative has been strengthened effectively by the introduction of project workers from the 'Excellence in Cities' funding.
32. The social development of pupils is good. The school functions in a very orderly way, within a well-implemented system of rewards and consequences. The multi-ethnic school society integrates well in and around the school, and has convivial playtimes. The headteacher and staff present good role models, demonstrating respect for all pupils. This attitude greatly strengthens the pupils' feelings of being valued and is reflected in their improved attitudes to school and to learning. This is especially important in view of the number of pupils who join the school at other than the normal time.
33. As a multicultural society, the school celebrates the uniqueness of all groups of pupils, and cultural development is satisfactory. An annual cultural evening provides a suitable opportunity for parents and the community to share in the life of the school. Recent training has strengthened teachers' understanding of how to present black role models in an effective way and the benefits of this training were observed in an assembly. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in their own community by, for example, taking their artwork to be displayed as a part of the décor of a local

hotel. However, pupils have too few opportunities in RE lessons to learn about a range of beliefs, and in art and design to understand the work of artists of differing cultures.

34. Community links are good. All pupils have the opportunities of visits both locally and further afield to broaden their horizons. Visits include the theatre, library, farm, Cathedral, museums, and art galleries, an outdoor education centre and National Indoor Arena (NIA). Pupils have been actively involved with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra in a music project. In addition pupils are made aware of the needs of others through charity collections. Relationships with partner institutions are developing. Pupils transfer to a large number of secondary schools, and the quality of links with them is variable. Reading volunteers from the NIA assist pupils by hearing them read at lunchtimes. The school also links with the nearby college and university to offer students a placement, thus giving pupils the opportunity to work with other adults. Children benefit through work with the education officer at the Cathedral. The Business Education Partnership and TRANSCO have assisted the school with additional resources, thus adding to pupils' enjoyment and interest.

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

35. The school provides good pastoral care for its pupils, and promotes their welfare well. Staff are caring, committed, know their pupils well and are sensitive to their needs and concerns. They are good role models. Most pupils welcome the help and guidance given. This is particularly important in view of the large numbers of pupils that enter and leave the school during each school year. It meets the pupils' emotional and physical needs effectively. Although there are few formal systems for monitoring and recording the pupils' personal development, this is done effectively on an informal basis. The school's provision for child protection is good, and follows locally agreed procedures fully. All staff are trained and vigilant, sensitive to the well-being of the pupils and report any concerns correctly. Good use is made of outside professional agencies, should the need arise. Pupils' medical needs are met effectively, and parents are contacted quickly if there are concerns. The youngest children are supported very well, and their individuality promoted strongly, enabling them to make a confident start to their education. This is valued by parents. Satisfactory review procedures for pupils with special educational needs are in place, and each pupil has an individual action plan appropriate to need. These pupils receive good quality support from classroom assistants and are included fully in every aspect of school life. However, day-to-day assessment of all groups of pupils in the school is unsatisfactory.
36. Procedures for the monitoring of attendance are now good. Registration is prompt and efficient and pupils know the routines well. A small, but significant number of pupils have poor attendance records and these adversely affect the school's figures. Not all parents value the education of their children and allow them to be away from school for no good reason. The school has made parents fully aware of the procedures to notify absence and the majority now comply. The headteacher checks attendance rigorously in order to identify pupils who need support, using the education welfare officer effectively to follow up concerns. The school is doing much to improve the unsatisfactory rate of attendance, such as the awarding of attendance certificates and the picture is improving steadily. Pupils who persistently arrive late are offered help and support to improve.
37. Recently introduced procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good, and are a clear strength of the school. Much work has been done to raise standards of behaviour and self esteem through the introduction of a clear behaviour policy and rules which all pupils know and understand well. These are steadily having a positive effect. Staff are consistent and fair in their application of rewards and sanctions, and pupils are very aware of the high standards expected at all times. The majority of pupils respond positively. There is a small, but significant number of pupils who present challenging behaviour, and inappropriate actions are dealt with very promptly, with parents involved where necessary. The exclusion policy is fairly and rigorously

applied and most pupils agree they deserve this action. Parents are pleased with the improvement in standards and praise the house point system. Good behaviour is celebrated in assemblies. The lunchtime staff have received appropriate training and enforces high standards. Equipment provided at lunchtime enhances pupils' enjoyment and social skills.

38. There are some weaknesses in the procedures for monitoring health and safety and the governors are not sufficiently well-informed regarding their responsibilities.
39. Careful initial assessments are used very well to provide suitable activities for the youngest children. The regular systems used to establish what the children know, understand and can do are good across all aspects of the foundation stage curriculum. Reading records in the Reception class are of a very good quality, with comments on effort and progress from all adults involved. However the good assessment practice of the Foundation Stage is not continued throughout the school. At Key Stages 1 and 2, procedures for assessing pupils' achievements, and recording their academic progress are unsatisfactory. The assessment policy is out of date and it no longer reflects current practice. Where assessment opportunities are part of teaching plans, they do not link closely enough to the teaching scheme, and the results are not used often enough to inform the next steps in the pupils' learning, or set targets in most subjects. Regular reviews of pupils' work have started in some subjects, but this is only just beginning to be used in order to plan further learning. At present co-ordinators have no secure way of knowing standards in their subjects and cannot take informed decisions on how to improve them, although national test results are now analysed to help improve teaching, so that standards can be raised.
40. In English and mathematics pupils are set individual targets for improvement, which helps them to make better progress, but generally pupils are not aware of how they are improving in their learning. Marking is inconsistent throughout the school. Where it is good, it helps pupils in improving their strengths and supports work on their weaknesses. Few records are kept in a way which enables teachers to check on individual progress. There are no swimming records to support progress.
41. Teachers' assessment skills are generally unsatisfactory, and so the school's priority for developing this aspect is very pertinent.

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

42. The school strives hard to reach out and involve parents in their children's education. Regular, good quality newsletters and letters to parents keep them well informed of events in a clear and encouraging style. Parents are invited to be involved in their child's education through invitations to parents' evenings, concerts and class assemblies and to help in school. The school prospectus is out of date and is in the process of being rewritten. Parents of children in the Foundation Stage are involved closely in their child's progress and kept well informed of teaching programmes and children's learning targets. Here, and at Key Stage 1 and 2, there are parents' workshops for English, mathematics and science. Parents feel comfortable about approaching staff, and many parents talk to staff informally before school and at the end of the day. Regular sessions are held to help new pupils and parents understand school routines and expectations.
43. The quality of information provided to parents through annual reports is satisfactory, but they do not consistently inform parents of targets for improvement. Procedures for involving parents of pupils with special educational needs are improving rapidly as a result of recent revisions to the processes.
44. Responses to questionnaires and attendance at the pre-inspection meeting for parents were low. Those parents who did respond were generally supportive of the school and its work, and many felt that it was continuing to improve.

45. Despite the school's determined efforts, parental involvement in the life and work of the school is limited. There is no parents' association, and very few parents help in school or hear their children read at home. This lack of involvement has a significant negative impact on the attitudes of many pupils towards school, and the standards they achieve. Only sixty-three per cent of parents have signed the home/school agreement. Some parents expressed concern regarding homework. The inspection team consider that parents' views regarding homework are valid. Homework is set inconsistently across the school, and does not add significantly to the pupils' learning. It does not fulfil the intentions of the home/school agreement.

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

46. Serious concerns about the unsatisfactory quality of the leadership and management of the school were noted during the previous inspection, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. It was a key issue of the 1998 report. This situation has altered. The quality of the leadership and management of the headteacher and the newly appointed deputy headteacher is very good. This is a very significant improvement. The quality of the leadership and management provided by the governing body is, however, still unsatisfactory.
47. The headteacher, who was appointed in September 2000, is very committed and has a clear vision for the improvement of the school. Progress towards improvement prior to her arrival had been slow. In a few short months, many aspects of the school's work have improved markedly. A new vision has been created. Many changes are taking place, and a range of carefully considered developments are being initiated in order to boost standards and to create a new ethos in the school. Central to this is the firm commitment to the right of every child to receive the best education possible. Improvements include the establishment of a clear behaviour code for the pupils, the expectation of good work habits, a review and revision of the curriculum, better delegation of responsibilities, improved lesson planning by teachers, the setting of realistic targets for the pupils' attainment, and the greater involvement of governors in the management and leadership of the school.
48. The headteacher is supported very ably by the deputy head headteacher. The two senior managers work together well and have made a good start in initiating and managing the necessary changes, and in influencing and motivating staff and pupils. They lead by example, accept responsibility readily, and provide very good levels of support to staff, pupils and parents alike. They know what needs to be done in order for the school to improve, and they share the determination to see it done. This is leading to a growing awareness amongst all the staff and a greater corporate will to succeed. However there is still significant staff absence. Close analysis of patterns of staff absence, and a supportive return to work policy, are needed.
49. There is now a comprehensive and focused school improvement plan. A great deal of strategic thinking and careful planning has been done to support ongoing developments. There has been insufficient time for these developments to manifest themselves in greatly improved national test scores but, as many parents themselves acknowledge, overall behaviour has improved, the pupils are beginning to work harder, and the quality of life in the school has improved a great deal. Plans are in hand for the further development of the senior management team, and for extending the role and responsibilities of the curriculum co-ordinators. Co-ordinators have begun to play their part in shaping the direction of the school, and have a clear understanding of the range of their roles. The role still has a long way to develop, however, as co-ordinators do not yet have the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning in classes, and so do not have a well-informed view of standards of teaching and pupils' progress in every subject. Performance management systems are in place to help teachers review their work and set targets for improvement. Work has gone on to provide the governors with a better understanding of the needs of the school and of how they might support its development. The senior management team is looking closely at how to make best use

of the skills of the staff, and how to improve communications between all those involved in educating the pupils, and the better control of financial and other resources.

50. The governing body is supportive of the school. However, it is not fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The governors have a limited knowledge of how best to proceed in the task of supporting the school's much needed improvement and, therefore, are not sufficiently effective in helping to shape its direction. Their procedures for monitoring and evaluating what is happening are weak. Their understanding of the financial position is limited, although they are working to obtain better value for money in their purchases. Currently, the headteacher, with help from the local education authority, is assisting the governors to a better understanding of how higher standards are to be achieved, and of the need for targeting finances to specific developments and monitoring the outcomes. This is essential, as the income for each pupil is very high, but is not matched by a high level of performance. Although specific grants are used effectively to improve standards in learning and behaviour of targeted groups of pupils, the school has yet to apply the principles of best value adequately. Although the school has become effective in a short time, the value for money it provides is unsatisfactory, as it has a significant deficit budget and there are no formal plans in place to remedy this.
51. The school has sufficient teachers and support staff to match the demands of the Foundation Stage and National Curriculum. Support staff work hard and contribute well to school improvements. The accommodation is spacious and, despite current disruptive building work, is being managed purposefully and with increasing efficiency. The range of learning resources is adequate to the school's curriculum and the age range of the pupils, although there are shortages in some areas, notably history, geography and art. Increasingly good use is being made of technology to support the school's work.
52. The impact of all the recent hard work is very good. There is still much to do, but expectations are rising. The school is showing many signs of very significant improvement, and has addressed conscientiously and comprehensively the Key Issues from the previous inspection. From a school judged to have serious weaknesses in 1998, it is now an improving school. This is due, largely, to the very good initiative, sensitivity and dedication of the headteacher, who leads the staff very well. The school's ethos is being strengthened rapidly, good management systems are being put into place, and the capacity for success is now good.

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

In order to improve the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by the pupils, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) raise standards in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2, and in mathematics at Key Stage 1 by
  - further raising standards of pupils' behaviour and self-esteem.  
(Paragraph Nos. 3. 4. 12. 14. 15. 64. 75. 84. 85)
  - ensuring greater consistency in teaching across the school through addressing the issue of high staff absences.  
(Paragraph Nos. 4. 22. 48. 63. 78)
  
- (2) raising standards at Key Stage 1 and 2 in religious education, art and design, design and technology, geography, and history, and in information and communication technology at Key Stage 2 by reviewing whole school curriculum plans so that they more effectively support the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in each subject.  
(Paragraph Nos. 27. 33. 90. 91. 93. 95. 96. 102. 104. 112. 126)

- (3) improve ways of assessing what pupils have learned, and the progress they have made so that the information can be used to support teaching to better target the learning needs of groups and individuals.  
(Paragraph Nos. 73. 78. 79. 86. 87. 106. 118. 125. 126)
- (4) strengthen the role of curriculum co-ordinators, so that they have a well-informed view of standards of teaching and pupils' progress in their subject.  
(Paragraph Nos.49. 73. 113)
- (5) ensure that the governing body fulfils its responsibilities effectively by
- becoming fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses, so that it can more closely monitor the school's effectiveness,  
(Paragraph Nos. 50)
  - making use of detailed analyses of assessment results to target its spending to bring about improvements in standards and ensure 'best value'.  
(Paragraph Nos. 50)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	57

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	19	32	40	7	0	0

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

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

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	39	132
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	29	95

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	8	25

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	12

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	29
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	25

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.2

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	1.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1**

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	4	6	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	4	4
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (68)	100 (68)	100 (68)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	4	4
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (68)	100 (73)	100 (68)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	6	15	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	1	0	1
	Girls	9	7	7
	Total	10	7	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	48 (30)	33 (22)	38 (22)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	10	7	8
	Total	10	7	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	48 (22)	33 (22)	38 (22)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)



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

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	56
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	4
White	28
Any other minority ethnic group	23

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

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	3	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	1	0

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

### *Teachers and classes*

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	18.2

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

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	100.5

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.5

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

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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### *Financial information*

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	526,376
Total expenditure	544,279
Expenditure per pupil	3,147
Balance brought forward from previous year	-1003
Balance carried forward to next year	-18,906

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	171
Number of questionnaires returned	23

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	39	0	4	9
My child is making good progress in school.	48	48	0	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	49	4	4	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	26	35	9	13
The teaching is good.	31	52	4	4	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	52	13	9	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	48	4	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	48	0	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	35	43	9	4	9
The school is well led and managed.	22	52	9	4	13
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	48	9	4	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	9	44	17	13	17

**Other issues raised by parents**

No other significant issues were raised by parents.

## **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**

53. At the time of the inspection, there were sixty-two children at the Foundation Stage, thirty-nine in the Nursery class and twenty-three in the Reception class. Initial (Baseline) assessment is conducted at both the Nursery and Reception stage to provide information about the initial levels of achievement of the children. Overall attainment on entry to the Nursery class is below the average found nationally, and many children find difficulty in persevering in a task. Their achievement on entry to the Reception class is above the local education authority average, but overall, matches the average found nationally. By the time the children enter Year 1 they have made, overall, very good progress, especially in the Nursery class, and most achieve well the early learning goals in all areas of learning.
54. Since the previous inspection, teaching of very good quality has been maintained and the children continue to make very good progress in their learning. This is due to the teachers' care for the children, their efficient and comprehensive planning of activities, and the very good relationships that form the cornerstone of the life and work of the Nursery and Reception classes.
55. Many parents express the view that the Foundation Stage provision is of a very high quality, and inspection observations indicate that they are right. The school makes very good efforts to establish a working partnership with parents from the beginning. The parents are provided with good information about the school and its work, and they are welcomed warmly. This helps to build the children's confidence and to create a positive ethos for learning.
56. Effective liaison is maintained between the Nursery and the Reception staff, and planning is done together. Good records are kept of the individual children's development so that the transition to school and the more formal stages of learning, is a smooth process, based on a shared vision, combined aims and objectives for learning, and co-ordinated practice.
57. The children's **personal, social and emotional development** is a strength. They respond well to the teachers' high expectations of them, work hard at all times and try to do their best. They often become completely absorbed in what they are doing and concentrate for long periods. They are offered varied choices in the Nursery, and the staff is careful to ensure that the children experience a wide range of purposeful activities. They continuously offer praise for good work and effort, but remain critical and measured in their analysis of the children's successes. The possibility of choice aids the children's interest in learning significantly, and they become increasingly independent and able to manage themselves and their work. They learn to register their own attendance, for example, and about the necessity for hygiene when cooking, dressing themselves in protective clothing for painting and other more 'messy' activities. They also help to tidy up well when an activity is finished. The children express their feelings confidently and generally show a great deal of interest and excitement in what they are doing. They join in the lively and interesting learning activities cheerfully and purposefully, whether it is investigating the sort of environment that worms live in, listening to stories, cooking, investigating the properties of water, or learning to count. At the Reception stage, learning activities are more formalised, and build on the good practice and routines of the earlier stage. The very good team-work of the staff ensures that the children have a wide range of opportunities for learning, for social interaction, for sharing, and for working individually. The support given to them is continuous, and the children rapidly become active learners. They mature steadily and with assurance.
58. The children's speaking and listening skills are generally good. Their very good progress in **communication, language and literacy** skills is fostered well through listening to stories, singing, sharing activities, talking through what they have found out, and adult encouragement to read and write at every opportunity. The adults use language that extends the children's vocabulary, and the

classrooms are full of displays that motivate the children to look and to express their opinions and ideas. Many children in the Nursery make good attempts to write their name. They have many opportunities to use computers and books, to take books home to share with their parents, and to look at books that relate to the activities they have experienced. Similarly, the children in Reception have good opportunities for language work and communication, and show rapidly developing reading and writing skills. Most children follow instructions well and are keen to answer questions. Their answers are generally accurate but limited often to phrases or very short sentences. Their phonic skills are sound and used effectively. Higher-attaining pupils are beginning to use prediction skills well. Lower-attaining pupils trace over the teachers' writing with growing confidence and control. Higher-attaining pupils write simple phrases and sentences independently, with good pencil control. They are beginning to make their letters appropriately even and spell simple common words and words of three letters accurately. Most of the children achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning by the end of the Reception year.

59. The children's **mathematical development** is carefully nurtured so that most make very good progress. Baseline assessment indicates that the children are rather better in their spatial awareness than in number. The staff ensures that number work features regularly in the work activities. Many opportunities are provided for counting and sorting, and to use number concepts in everyday situations, such as an imaginary travel agency. With help, they can calculate totals from groups of objects. Activities, such as moving toys from an upper shelf to a lower shelf and back helps the children to understand the concepts of 'above' and 'below'. In the Reception class, most of the children can count confidently to ten, and are learning to write and subtract numbers in simple equations. They also recognise basic shapes. Most of the children achieve the mathematical learning goals by the time they transfer to Year 1.
60. Many activities are planned to aid children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** very well. The use of topic themes, such as a study of volcanoes, extends effectively the children's knowledge of the world about them. Good use is made of the children's own experiences, and that of their parents, who frequently support the work by supplying first-hand information. Scientific studies of worm habitats, for example, enhance the children's wider understanding of the natural world. Particularly good use is made of topics such as this to increase their vocabulary and to pose questions. The children frequently use a computer, and they often manage a cassette player themselves in order to listen to stories. This is usually accompanied by the use of a reading text. Similarly, the children learn to use small tools such as scissors and cooking utensils competently and safely. Discussions about each other's past experiences help them to gain an understanding of time and change. Very good progress ensures that the learning goals for this aspect of learning are generally well matched by the time the children transfer to Year 1.
61. The **physical development** of the children is satisfactory. They make steady progress and most achieve the early learning goals by the end of the stage. They learn to use indoor and outdoor spaces and apparatus safely. Most move with confidence, finding different ways to travel, such as running, hopping, and skipping. They show an increasing awareness of other's space and are mostly good at sharing. A good range of construction kits is used to give the children experiences of building and taking apart. Activities with malleable materials allow them to squeeze, poke, and twist, thereby increasing their manipulation skills. The Nursery children are encouraged carefully to try to undress and dress themselves for physical education sessions, which helps them become more independent. The school is considering further provision of outdoor activities for the Foundation Stage. There is ample space, which has recently been enclosed and made safe, and the resources are, overall, satisfactory. However, the range of learning opportunities would be increased through the development of construction activities, natural areas, and specific activity areas which would help extend the children's early learning and general physical development.
62. The children's **creative development** is encouraged satisfactorily by opportunities to draw and paint, and to make collages. During the inspection, individual children were observed painting, using a vase of daffodils as a stimulus. This led to some thoughtful and attractive results, and it

was obvious that the children's observational skills and perseverance were increased. The children use colour and a variety of materials in a confident manner. Good opportunities for role-play stimulate the children's imaginations. They enter into the roles with intense concentration and effort. Music is a regular part of the activities. The children in the Nursery and Reception class handle percussion instruments with increasing skills to make interesting and lively patterns of sound. Performance before an audience in assemblies often reaches a very high standard. The children's level of confidence in making music is high. The expected levels of creative development are achieved by the time the children move to Year 1.

## ENGLISH

63. The results of national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 show that standards were well above the national average, and compared to similar schools in an exceptionally small cohort of ten pupils. Inspection evidence shows that very good progress has been made since the last inspection when standards were found to be well below the national average. Standards now, overall, broadly match national expectations. The end of Key Stage 2 national tests showed standards to be well below the national average, and below those for similar schools. There has been little improvement since the previous inspection. One reason for this is the very high movement of pupils in and out of the school in each year group throughout the school year, which disrupts the pupils' learning experiences despite the school's efforts to do its best for all pupils. Also the high rate of staff absence disrupts the continuity of learning.
64. Standards in reading and writing have improved, although they are still below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Good quality teaching, notably in Years 2 and 6, has been a significant factor in improvement, particularly in this school year. Most teachers ensure that all pupils are involved fully in their lessons, regardless of their learning, behavioural or language difficulties. Well-focused class teaching and good use of the National Literacy Strategy have brought about the recent improvement. A backlog of underachievement is being addressed by clearer targeting of pupils for whom expectations are higher, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2, through small 'Booster' group work.
65. Most pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 listen well and attentively in their lessons and most teachers give active encouragement to ensure that all pupils have an opportunity to answer questions, and to participate in discussions. This involvement is helped by the relatively small size of classes and the 'Booster' group teaching. The impact of the numbers of pupils starting and leaving the school at other than normal times, together with the number of pupils who have some difficulty in using standard patterns of English, restrict the progress of their speaking skills, and standards are below expectations at Year 6. Pupils work hard to express themselves clearly, but a high proportion is not confident to do so unless encouraged by their teacher through well-focused and structured questioning. For example, pupils in Year 6 had developing arguments for and against foxhunting, but a higher-attaining pupil could not rehearse a significant number of points confidently.
66. Standards in reading at Key Stage 1 are close to the national average but the range of pupils' attainment is concentrated in the middle band of attainment, with fewer pupils attaining at the higher level by the end of Year 2. Pupils enjoy reading and make sound progress because teachers use a well-structured reading programme which enables the pupils to make small, successful steps. Pupils have a good knowledge of the vocabulary in their reading books and read generally with fluency. They use simple letter sound clues to help them predict new words. However, pupils' phonic skills are insufficiently developed to enable a quick response to unfamiliar words and this limits the pace of pupils' progress and their ability to work out more difficult texts. Pupils have good knowledge about who contributes to creating a book and most pupils can identify and use a contents page and an index at the end of Year 2. Pupils are much less confident talking about books that they have enjoyed, and have a limited knowledge with which to identify authors. Teachers support the development of pupils' reading well through class reading

of both published texts and stories written by the class. Classroom assistants provide good support to the reading progress of pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils so that they make sound progress.

67. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in reading are unsatisfactory overall. By this stage the proportion of pupils who have not been in the school from the reception year and who have not received a consistency to their teaching, is high. Higher-attaining pupils are working at the levels expected of average pupils nationally, in most year groups. In Year 5, where most of the pupils are girls, they are more enthusiastic readers, and have a stronger culture of reading and books at home. Most pupils in the key stage have difficulty in identifying favourite authors and cannot recall, or discuss to any extent, books or authors they have enjoyed. Individual reading books in the school are well matched to pupils' skills and almost all read with fluency, sufficient expression and confidence. Guided reading books are pitched at a level, which suitably challenges pupils' reading skills. However, basic reading skills are not consolidated effectively at the beginning of Key Stage 2, and pupils make insufficient progress to enable them to analyse more difficult texts. Their skimming and scanning skills are not developed well enough to enable them to understand the substance of a text or to track information quickly. By the end of the key stage almost all pupils read silently and can give a sound factual recall of what they have read. They have less skill in describing the main features of a text or of making inferences about the impact of one feature of a narrative on another. Good teaching in the literacy lessons and in 'Booster' classes is beginning to have an impact and these skills are developing, although pupils do not apply them independently particularly well.
68. Standards in writing at Key Stage 1 match national expectations. Good teaching provides pupils with appropriate models of writing and the knowledge of punctuation and grammar to ensure satisfactory progress. Pupils in Year 2 were very excited at using the story of 'Goldilocks' as a setting for their own class creation, in which she arrived at the home of a dragon. Skilful teaching interjected into the narrative a good understanding of adjectives and an awareness of adverbs, together with opportunities for pupils to practise their knowledge of speech marks and to develop their choices of vocabulary. Higher-attaining pupils then used speech marks in their independent work. Generally, pupils use capital letters and full stops appropriately. Their spelling of common words is accurate and applied correctly to their independent writing. Marking is supportive of pupils' self esteem and points clearly to targets for improvement. Handwriting skills are unsatisfactory, as their cursive writing style is underdeveloped.
69. Pupils' standards in writing at the end of Key Stage 2 are unsatisfactory. However, standards have improved since the beginning of the school year, in September. Pupils have developed a sound knowledge of the essential features of punctuation and the forms of a range of narrative and non-chronological writing. They understand clearly how to craft a narrative and are beginning to apply this knowledge to their own stories. However, the pattern of their spoken language and their understanding of Standard English prevent many pupils from putting their knowledge into effective practice in independent work. They consequently mismatch tenses or use incorrect idiom. However, where the requirement is for more straightforward application of a learned skill, such as punctuation or spelling, they are more successful. Pupils in Year 6 responded with some lively and accurately punctuated direct speech in a response to a working title of 'If pictures could talk'. Literacy lessons, particularly in the second half of the key stage, and 'Booster' group lessons are well structured, convey the teachers' high expectations and consequently help pupils to improve. For example, rigorous questioning which challenged a Year 6 support group to think very extensively, resulted in most pupils writing a well-balanced argument on the issues of corporal punishment.
70. The quality of teaching is good overall at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2, where practice is variable, ranging from unsatisfactory to good. It is consistently better in Years 5 and 6. Teachers know their pupils well and use this knowledge to guide their teaching. A strength of the teaching is that almost all teachers make determined efforts to include all pupils in their lessons by

planning for their support, giving clear encouragement and ensuring that pupils are fully involved in discussions with questions well matched to their ability. Almost all classroom assistants are well-briefed and guided by teachers to support those pupils with special educational needs and/or behavioural difficulties. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, pupils were not challenged to extend the range of sentences they used in their stories, discussions were brief, and instructions were not clear. As a result, learning was limited and the quality of the pupils' ideas was meagre.

71. Lessons are well planned and most teachers have a good knowledge of the subject. Explanations are clear. The good teaching observed illustrates amply the challenging use of a range of styles of questioning, effective use of independent working time and well-focused use of the end of the lesson to confirm pupils' knowledge. This conveys high expectation and results in the accelerated pace of learning seen in Year 2 and Years 5 and 6.
72. Pupils' learning benefits significantly from teachers modelling ideas of how to use the various forms of language and by the well-structured teaching of clearly defined steps in pupils' literacy work. This is particularly important for those pupils with English as an alternative language, who make similar progress in their learning to their peers. The practice of setting targets for pupils and of consistently good marking, indicate specific aspects for improvement and is beginning to have a positive effect on learning. This is making a clear contribution to the school's aim of raising pupils' self-esteem. The funding from the 'Excellence in Cities' initiative is used well to provide very well-focused, good quality teaching to improve further the learning of middle- and higher-ability pupils at Year 6. Information and communication technology is beginning to be used to support learning in English, but as yet its use is not sufficiently developed. Literacy is not used extensively across the curriculum although there are pockets of good examples in science, and in religious education at Key Stage 1.
73. The coordinator has the knowledge and skills to improve the quality of teaching of literacy across the school. She has introduced the national literacy strategy effectively, and ensured a consistency to planning, which she monitors well. She had not had enough opportunity to observe teaching and observe standards in lessons because of difficulty in finding supply teachers. The targets for further development in the school improvement plan are insufficiently detailed to give a clear steer to priorities for raising standards. Further analysis of assessment information will assist this process. A newly developed library is laid out well but has yet to be integrated into the pupils' learning. The school is well resourced in terms of books and equipment.

## **MATHEMATICS**

74. The results of the 2000 end of Key Stage 1 national tests showed that all pupils in Year 2 achieved at a level higher than expected. This is very high compared to the national average and to schools in similar contexts. The cohort of ten pupils was small and none had special educational needs. The results of the Key Stage 2 national tests showed that pupils in Year 6 achieved standards which were very low in comparison with the national average and for similar schools. One reason for this is the high turnover of pupils entering and leaving the school part-way through, so that they experience significant breaks in their learning. The school has done a thorough analysis of achievement by gender and race. This demonstrates that girls are achieving better than boys, especially at Key Stage 2. The school is taking vigorous action to raise the attainment of boys, particularly African Caribbean boys, by its well-targeted use of specific funds. This demonstrates its clearly expressed aim that all pupils should be given every opportunity to do well at school.
75. Inspection findings show that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are below national expectations, for the majority of pupils. This shows improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be well below. Over all learning is satisfactory, and many pupils have yet to develop a consistent approach to learning. Both boys and girls, and pupils of different



ethnicities, drift in concentration and effort in their learning. This leads to variable progress, despite the best efforts of the teachers to keep them interested and on task. In some lessons seen, pupils made good progress as a result of good teaching.

76. Pupils' skills in numeracy vary in Key Stage 1. In Year 1, pupils are able to sort coins in sets to make 5p from 5x1p but do not yet confidently recognise that  $2p+2p+1p$  is equal to 5p. At the beginning of the year, lower attaining pupils do not form some of their numbers correctly. They are able to do simple addition to 5 and, with help, subtract numbers to 5, although they sometimes confuse plus and minus operations. Higher attaining pupils can add and subtract to 12 and compare and order weight. In Year 2, average-attaining pupils are beginning to understand partitioning but are not secure in their knowledge of which numbers combine to make 10. Higher attaining pupils have secure knowledge of number facts to 100. They estimate the length of objects with a fair degree of accuracy. The majority of pupils are working at the lower end of the expected level. They can double and halve numbers to 20 correctly and devise number sentences using all four operations appropriately. Girls generally achieve better than boys because they are not so easily distracted. When working in groups, most boys and girls work together and communicate well.
77. Pupils in Year 3 work at levels which broadly match, or are just above expectations for their age. They compare, order and sequence numbers to 1000 accurately and use inverse operations. They use the four operations appropriately to solve problems in their investigative work. They find the areas of two dimensional shapes correctly and tell the time to the nearest five minutes. Good support from classroom assistants for lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, enables them to explain to the rest of the class what they have done. Pupils in Year 4 can add and subtract multiples of 5 and 10 to 100 in their heads, and are able to draw and use tally charts correctly. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 5 are working at expected levels, problem solving and using their knowledge of dividing by 4 with remainders successfully. They discuss answers and approaches, checking whether the answer is plausible. Average-attaining pupils halve and halve again two digit numbers to find a quarter and three quarters and are working at a lower level than expected. Lower attaining pupils use cubes to halve two digit numbers correctly. Pupils in Year 6 can order a half, three quarters and one tenth accurately and recognise that 0.1 is the same as one tenth. They use all four number rules appropriately and recognise numbers to one million. Lower-attaining pupils are not secure in their tables and do not know what is a quarter of 2. They do not understand the concept of percentage and give the answer to 10% of 60 as 50. They are unable to use mathematical language to describe the properties of a pyramid. The teacher is aware of these weaknesses and is working hard to raise standards. His clear and realistic understanding of school targets for attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2, and his good subject knowledge, help pupils' learning progress satisfactorily. Pupils with special educational needs receive the help and support they need to make equal progress to their peers.
78. Teaching is satisfactory at both Key Stages. Where teachers' explanations and tasks are clear to the pupils they get on with their work quickly. The teachers' discipline is patient, but firm, and this enables most pupils to concentrate and keep on task. Where humour is used well and teachers have a good relationship with their pupils, learning is effective. Although numeracy skills are taught thoroughly lesson plans do not always follow closely enough the intentions of the National Numeracy Strategy. As a result some aspects, such as problem solving, are not taught effectively. Lesson plans and activities provided usually match the needs of different groups of pupils, but not necessarily individual need, so that most make satisfactory progress in lessons. Since the last inspection, the pace of lessons has improved, reflecting the teachers' increasing expectations of their pupils' thought and effort. However, the last part of lessons is not always used well to check and reinforce what pupils have learnt. Where teaching is good, teachers' good questioning skills enable many pupils to explain clearly their own methods of working out. The teacher then clarifies the explanation so that all pupils maintain understanding. Opportunities for assessment are planned too vaguely to give accurate information on which to base further lessons, and thus develop the pupils' learning further. This is significant, as a high number of pupils arrive

and leave in each class during the course of each year, and their learning is disrupted. High staff absence causes further disruption. Although ICT is beginning to be used to support learning in mathematics, there is scope for it to be used more.

79. The mathematics co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and a realistic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision. He is aware of the improvement required in assessment procedures in order to inform planning and so raise standards, but, as yet, has not taken effective action towards this end. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and the emphasis now is firmly on improving standards.

## SCIENCE

80. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 indicate that there was a significant rise in standards in science last year (2000). They rose above the expected levels from a previously low level and compared well with schools of similar type and size. Inspection findings indicate that a majority of the pupils are achieving appropriate standards, and are making satisfactory progress in their learning. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, where standards were well below expectations.
81. Most of the pupils entering Key Stage 1 do so having had earlier good quality experiences of science. They continue to add to their knowledge effectively with work, for example, on forces, materials, and birth and growth. Questions such as: 'What would I need to keep me healthy...?' give rise to tasks that develop the pupils' understanding of the need of the human body for appropriate foods. Experiments with toy cars enable them to gain an insight into how forces cause objects to move. The pupils make satisfactory progress in exploring a wide range of ways of recording, for example, through drawings and diagrams, graphs, questionnaires, and surveys. In this their literacy skills are used to good effect.
82. Standards at Key Stage 2 are unsatisfactory overall. National Curriculum test scores indicate that, despite a recent rise in attainment, the required levels are not reached by the time the pupils are eleven. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. Scrutiny of the pupils' work shows standards to be secure at the appropriate levels in Years 3 and 4, where the pupils maintain satisfactory progress in their learning. However, in Years 5 and 6 there is a sharp dip in both progress and attainment.
83. One of the reasons for this is that the investigative and experimental type of work often taught at the earlier stages is not carried on sufficiently into the second half of Key Stage 2. There are too few opportunities for the pupils to choose the equipment needed for an experiment or to suggest which questions need to be investigated. The pupils' workbooks show only a limited range of ways of recording their work, and limited depth in the studies and work they produce. Although they gain knowledge of gravity, change, pollination, life cycles and, for example, the symbolic format for drawing electrical circuits, the amount of work actually produced is small. In contrast, the amount of work the pupils produce at the earlier stages is substantial. The mathematical skills of the pupils at later Key Stage 2 are not used sufficiently to represent and interpret data. Information and communication technology is used hardly at all to support the pupils' studies.
84. The quality of the teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory. Indeed, some good teaching was seen in Year 6. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. There were, however, often occasions at all stages when the teachers needed to spend time ensuring good discipline, and that easily distracted pupils remained on task, rather than on extending the science work. Teachers take great care to ensure that all groups of pupils have the same opportunities to learn, reflecting the school's strong philosophy of valuing every pupil equally. Pupils with special educational needs join in lessons fully and are given good support so that they make sound progress.

85. Factors other than the teaching are influential in affecting the progress of the pupils in the later stages. One of these is the limited effort and interest shown by a significant number of the pupils. In one example, at Year 6, the pupils followed the tasks set by the teacher, who gave clear explanations and supported them well during the activities, but they appeared reluctant to enter into their learning with any zest. Some pupils tend to lack concentration and to produce the minimum amount of work. This is not so for the remainder of the school, where the pupils' attitudes towards science are more positive.
86. The teachers use a published scheme of work on which they base their planning, and, for the most part, lessons are planned carefully. Good attention is given to the development of the appropriate scientific vocabulary and the objectives of lessons are firmly adhered to. However, the information gained from individual and collective assessments is not used sufficiently to ensure the focused improvement of standards. The use of assessment is particularly important because of the high rate of pupil movement into and away from the school, plus the negative effect of staff absence so that many pupils do not achieve a continuous thread to their learning.
87. Science is to be part of a new initiative for development. The assessment procedures for science are being put into place steadily. What has not yet been achieved is the use of assessment information to help the teachers to target particular weaknesses in the learning so that they can focus on them in their planning, and so raise standards. The subject co-ordinator has compiled a great deal of evidence about what is being done in science, and about what the pupils are doing. However, she lacks the formal opportunity for advising other staff that is an essential part of the co-ordinating role.
88. The school has tried successfully to raise the profile of science, particularly at Key Stage 1, through the organisation of workshops for parents and pupils. This has included the invitation to theatre groups dealing with science subjects to perform in the school. These are very positive and praiseworthy features, but more direct action is needed in classrooms if the standards in the subject are to rise, particularly at Key Stage 2.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

89. During the inspection only one art and design lesson was observed, at Key Stage 2. Judgements are based upon a scrutiny of evidence in the classrooms and public areas, scrutiny of pupils' sketch books through the school, photographs of previous work and a review of the planned curriculum and timetables. At Key Stage 1, standards are below expectations, and pupils' progress is unsatisfactory, as it does not build on the good standards established in the Nursery. While there has been little improvement at Key Stage 1 since the previous inspection, there is a significant downward trend at Key Stage 2, from previously satisfactory standards.
90. Pupils at Key Stage 1 have too few opportunities to develop their skills, to experience a range of media and to explore a sufficient range of the elements of visual imagery. When encouraged, they create lively and colourful images, as for example in the water pastel paintings produced in Year 1. At Year 2, pupils make drawings of buildings and use rubbings to demonstrate surface and texture. Pupils make visits, for example to the nearby Symphony Hall, and record their visits pictorially, but this has not produced a range of work of any significance. Visits are not planned sufficiently to develop satisfactory observational skills, or the control of materials in a variety of media. Work in sketchbooks is below expected standards. The work here often links to other subjects at the expense of focusing on developing skills.
91. There is insufficient consistency and continuity in the development of pupils' skills at Key Stage 2, and here standards are poor. Some better work in painting illustrates a primitive style and is part of a good initiative to display work in the community. An abstract painting style has been taught as a means of pupils developing and expressing their personal emotions. However, evidence of

painting is limited, as is that of work exploring three dimensions. Pupils do not use their sketchbooks sufficiently to refine their drawing and observational skills, to use them to experiment, or as a source for further work.

92. In the one lesson seen, the teacher's management and organisation of the pupils was good. The pupils enjoyed the lesson and were satisfactorily attentive. Although in discussion at the end of the lesson the teacher checked pupils' understanding of the properties of clay, during the lesson too few pupils were challenged to improve their knowledge and skills, so that progress in the lesson was unsatisfactory.
93. The planned curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, but pupils do not have enough appropriate and regular experience in art and design to enable them to progress at a steady rate in all aspects of their work. Pupils at both key stages have insufficient opportunity to experience, explore and reflect on the styles of work of artists and craftsmen of other eras and cultures. The time given to the teaching of art and design is low and it is not used well enough to develop the subject effectively.
94. The co-ordinator is well qualified to manage the subject and provides a good role model in her own work. She looks at pupils' sketchbooks regularly to establish progress, and gives some supportive feedback to the pupils. She has insufficient opportunity to observe teaching through the school so that she can help it to become better. Both she and the school recognise that the provision for art and design needs to be reviewed as a priority. Although the school has a kiln, other resources are insufficient in quantity and quality.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

95. Standards in design and technology are below those expected for the ages of the pupils. This matches the findings of the previous inspection which found that many pupils did not have the skills and knowledge expected for their age. The development of design and technology has not been a priority in the school development plan, as emphasis has been placed, quite rightly, on raising standards in the core subjects. Co-ordination has been unsatisfactory as there is no curriculum map which outlines how the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are to be developed in a coherent way as they move through the school. This means that planning does not build on previous experiences with enough breadth and depth, so that pupils' learning and progress are unsatisfactory. Pupils in Year 6 used wood, card, chicken wire and papier mache to construct river systems to enhance their work in geography and science. Their designs lack the expected detail, and the final products show lack of accuracy in measuring, cutting and joining. There are no systems in place to record the progress made by groups or individual pupils, and very little finished work is kept that could illustrate to pupils the progress they have made, and makes it difficult for them to see how they could improve.
96. Although teaching was satisfactory in the two lessons seen, and all groups of pupils made satisfactory progress, overall it is unsatisfactory, as it does not build on the pupils' previous learning sufficiently to enable them to achieve well. Pupils in Year 5 are working on a project to design a logo for a community newspaper. In this, they have refined their original designs and developed several alternatives based on their understanding of the purpose of the newspaper and the needs of its readership. All pupils succeeded in producing a finished design, but their learning was modest as the teacher's expectations were not sufficiently high to challenge the pupils' thinking consistently. Activities chosen are usually in the same areas of the curriculum and contexts, materials and experiences are limited in depth and range. As yet, information and communication technology is not used to sufficiently to develop pupils' skills in making drawings and plans.
97. The new co-ordinator has made a determined and vigorous start to improving the situation. She

has made a clear analysis of the state of design and technology throughout the school. She has detailed and well-prioritised plans for action to address the low standards, so that curriculum development can take place promptly when it becomes a priority.

## **HISTORY and GEOGRAPHY**

98. Most pupils make unsatisfactory progress throughout the school and the majority attains standards that are below the national expectation at the end of both key stages. Pupils are not doing as well as they should because they have not been taught the key concepts, such as chronology and change over time in history, and skills required to make their knowledge coherent. This unsatisfactory situation is similar to that reported in the previous inspection and shows clearly that insufficient improvement has been made. Most pupils make similar progress irrespective of their gender, ethnicity or social circumstances.
99. In geography, pupils at Key Stage 1 have completed a suitable range of work linked to the topic of 'Journeys' that builds effectively upon learning developed in the foundation stage. In this study, pupils in Year 1 have studied the local area and have produced maps to show their journeys to school. These maps are relatively simple however, and indicate that the mapping skills of most pupils are still at a basic stage. Pupils in Year 2 understand that an island has water all around it and can identify correctly the sorts of transport that would be appropriate when travelling to an island. Most are not, however, able to imagine what it would be like to live on an island, either in Scotland or the Caribbean. Pupils in Year 1 have done little history this year and have not built significantly upon the skills developed in the Foundation Stage. Pupils in Year 2 have only a basic knowledge of the Fire of London. They have gained some understanding of life at that time by studying the diaries of Samuel Pepys. However, they have not been given sufficient opportunity to gain an understanding of the significance of key events in history and what we can learn from them.
100. In geography, pupils at Key Stage 2 have studied isolated aspects of a range of work. In Years 3 and 4 this includes holidays, hot and cold places around the world and environmental issues. Pupils in Year 5 have a suitable knowledge of geographical facts and can identify correctly key cities in the United Kingdom and in Europe, locating them on a map with accuracy. They have an appropriate knowledge of mapping symbols and can use them effectively to devise their own maps and plans. Pupils in the Year 6 class have gained a basic knowledge of the local area but are unable to identify patterns in either the physical or human geography of the locality. Their knowledge of other areas is poor and most are unable to compare or contrast localities with sufficient insight into geographical factors.
101. In history, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have studied a range of historical topics, but the work is mainly knowledge-based and does not pay sufficient attention to giving pupils an understanding of people, periods, episodes and key events that changed history. When studying the life and times of Henry VIII, for example, pupils were not clear why they were completing the task and did not understand the significance of identifying the various roles of the king, his courtiers and the servants. Higher-achieving pupils in Year 6 remember, in great detail, various historical facts they learned when completing different blocks of work, but are unable to explain the significance of what they have learned, or to explain different ways of representing and interpreting the things they have learned about the past.
102. The teaching of individual geography lessons seen during the inspection was satisfactory. In history, teaching in the one lesson observed during the inspection was unsatisfactory, because pupils did not understand the purpose of the task and insufficient learning resulted. A careful scrutiny of the work in books and on display and discussions with pupils indicates that teaching is unsatisfactory overall in both subjects because the lessons do not add up to a coherent whole which will help pupils to develop systematically the required concepts and skills. Some teachers

are not fully aware of the purpose behind their teaching, selecting isolated chunks of the teaching programmes because they fit in with the general theme being studied. In history, some teachers lack sufficient subject knowledge and confidence and are unsure of the significance of the material they are teaching, frequently teaching small sections of the programme, often in an illogical order. For example, pupils were taught about the Roman invasion of Britain before being taught anything significant about either the Romans or the Celts.

103. Most pupils concentrate appropriately, and say they enjoy history lessons. All groups of pupils make similar progress irrespective of their gender, ethnicity or social circumstances, although in some classes many pupils, particularly boys, drift on and off task as their concentration wanes. However, most pupils are proud of their knowledge of various facts and can recall the content of previous lessons and projects, even if their understanding of the significance of the work is limited.
104. The curriculum for history and geography is unsatisfactory. The school has recently adopted a published scheme of work, but staff are selecting discrete blocks from the this that fit the topic being studied and are teaching them without reference to what has gone before and what will follow. In geography, much of the work completed is work-sheet based and insufficient use is made of field-work. Teachers find suitable applications of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy, but insufficient use is made of ICT in the teaching of both subjects.
105. Both geography and history make an insufficient contribution of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, the history curriculum has been improved greatly by the recent introduction of work about notable black historical characters, and both parents and pupils think this is a positive step. A good example of this is the work on Martin Luther King in Years 3 and 4 and the lower school assembly about Mary Seacole.
106. There are no effective systems for assessing and recording the attainment and progress of individual pupils, and as a result, work in either subject is not matched accurately to their needs.
107. The overall quality of management of history and geography is unsatisfactory as insufficient progress has been made in the development of the subject. However, the new co-ordinator has already completed a thorough analysis of need and has a good understanding of the weaknesses that exist. There are insufficient resources to support the developments required to give the subject its appropriate status in the whole school curriculum.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

108. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 match national expectations. There has not been enough time for the improvements in resources and planning to affect standards at the end of Key Stage 2, and these remain below national expectations, as they were at the last inspection. The school has made steady progress since the last inspection, when some aspects of the learning programme were not taught and the requirements of the National Curriculum were not met. Standards of attainment were below national expectations at the end of both key stages. The oldest pupils have competent skills in word processing, graphics and researching information from a CD-ROM or the internet. They have had some experience of using ICT for data handling and display, but few opportunities to create sequences of instructions to control events, or to use simulations to explore alternative actions and to consider 'what if' questions to make choices. Curriculum plans show that these areas are to be taught this year. The school has the appropriate software and a programme of staff training plans to give them the knowledge and confidence to teach these areas.
109. Pupils in Year 1 use the mouse confidently and accurately to move words and pictures to make illustrated sentences. With support, they use graphics programmes to make Mother's Day cards. In Year 2, most pupils know how to save and print their work. They select and use simple mark

making tools to make coloured repeat patterns. They show an appropriate degree of independence in using text to communicate their own ideas. When writing their own poems many can use simple punctuation correctly and use capital letters to emphasise important words. They enter instructions accurately into a robotic toy so that it moves backwards and forwards the required amount.

110. In Year 6, pupils have had experience of using spreadsheets. All pupils use the Internet confidently to research the answers to questions. The contexts chosen match the pupils' own interests and make a good contribution to development in their own popular culture. They have experience of limited work on simple data bases, where data has been collected, ordered and represented in different forms, but attainment is at the level expected of pupils at Year 4.
111. All the pupils seen working on computers enjoyed it and most worked with sustained concentration. Where pupils shared a computer levels of co-operation were good. Of the two lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory in one and good in the other. In the good lesson, in Year 6, the teacher's detailed plans enabled him to introduce the lesson clearly. His high expectations that all pupils would maintain positive attitudes and independence resulted in effective learning for all pupils. In the satisfactory lesson, the work was well matched to the needs of most of the pupils but not all the activities were worthwhile, as some, in preparation for using the computer, were 'time-fillers'. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and enables the pupils to make sound progress. At Key Stage 2 teaching over time is unsatisfactory, as too little attention has been paid to some important areas of the required learning programme. All staff are aware of the importance of ICT skills and are working conscientiously to develop their confidence, skills and knowledge. All classrooms provide a sound ICT environment through labels, questions and instructions.
112. Resources for ICT have improved considerably with the very recent installation of the computer suite. This enables all pupils to have regular opportunities to develop and practise their ICT skills. Although ICT is beginning to be used to support work in a narrow range of activities, teachers are still not planning consistently enough for pupils to use and develop ICT skills in other subjects. This is a weakness also noted at the last inspection. During the inspection computers were used little, for example in literacy and numeracy lessons, when groups of pupils could have developed their subject learning and computer skills simultaneously. The ICT suite is under-used by pupils at Key Stage 2 in their own research and independent activity.
113. The school rightly continues to maintain ICT as a high priority for development in order to fully address the Key Issues from the previous inspection. The co-ordinator has very clear plans for future development, and is managing the subject effectively. She has identified correctly the need to strengthen staff confidence and expertise, but has been unable to monitor teaching and learning due to difficulties in supply cover. The high quality policy and developing systems for recording the progress and achievements of each pupil, support teachers well. The subject is well placed to make all round and rapid improvement.

## MUSIC

114. The quality of the pupils' work in music has improved significantly since the previous inspection in 1998. The quality then was not as good as that found in most schools. Now, the standards are good. A combination of improved planning by teachers, whole-school musical initiatives, and support from the local education authority's advisory service, has led to much improved provision. The attitudes of both pupils and staff towards the subject are positive. The teaching is often very good, and sometimes excellent, and the pupils, consequently, make good progress in their learning. The Key Issues from the previous inspection have been addressed fully.

115. The teaching is good overall. Ensemble musical contributions to assemblies by the youngest pupils show that they have developed good listening and performance skills. The children in the Reception class show good control when playing percussion instruments. They are being taught effectively how to sing and play in unison, with good regard for tempo, structure and dynamics. Good classroom discipline and interesting work ensure good musical control and progress for the pupils in Year 2. The classroom assistants make a very positive contribution to the pupils' learning.
116. In lessons observed at Key Stage 2, the quality of the teaching was very high. In one it was excellent. Well-planned lessons that include exploratory musical activities, such as evolving 'question and answer' phrases on xylophones, increase the level of the pupils' interest and enthusiasm. The outcomes are good. In one lesson in Year 5, the use of the pupils' own words to create multi-layered, multi-textured chanted sounds, was outstanding. The pace of the lesson was invigorating. The objectives for learning were shared and kept to the forefront. The pupils' ideas were fully utilised, and very good attention was paid to musical control and appropriate emphases in sound and silence. It was impossible for the spirits of an observer not to be lifted by the excellent quality of the work, in which all of the pupils were intensely involved. The pupils grew in confidence in their performance and rapidly increased their musical skills.
117. There is one aspect that affects the teaching negatively. In almost all classes, but particularly at Key Stage 2, there are a few pupils who seem determined to disrupt the good work going on, through inattention, limited perseverance, and lack of self-control. These pupils make the teachers' jobs more difficult, and sometimes slow the pace of the learning of others. The teachers maintain good levels of control. They are patient and persistent, and readily supportive, and while there is this negative feature, the pupils' involvement and general levels of success are good across the school – a distinctly different picture from the one reported previously.
118. The curriculum for music is being reviewed. A new co-ordinator took up post in January 2001. He is steadily getting to grips with the demands of the post, but needs further opportunities to monitor and evaluate what is happening, to discuss with staff how the curriculum can be extended, and how best to establish evaluative procedures to measure the progress of individual pupils. Music is being used positively to increase the pupils' spirituality and self-esteem.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

119. Pupils at both key stages make satisfactory progress and achieve standards overall that are in line with national expectations. This is a similar position to that found in the previous inspection. At Key Stage 1, in Year 2, the girls showed satisfactory sustained movement in a taped dance lesson. The boys in the class have poor listening skills, so were not sure what to do and could not take full advantage of the lesson. At Key Stage 2, the teacher's high expectations of behaviour and application allow pupils in Years 3 and 4 to gain confidence in swimming so that they work at a satisfactory level. The teacher's sensitive approach enables all pupils to work very hard to achieve a satisfactory level in most activities. Some activities in physical education make a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development, for example when pupils in Year 5 perform a Indian dance. In a Year 6 gymnastics lesson pupils are able to devise a short sequence to include a roll, jump and balance of sufficient quality for their age. They work satisfactorily together in a group and demonstrate sustained movement, but do not always apply enough control to all of their movements.
120. Teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. A particular skill is the firm management of many pupils' excited behaviour so that they can concentrate on the planned activity. Good awareness of safety issues ensures that pupils take care when working. A strength of the subject is the development of games and athletics. The Birmingham Bullets basketball team provides a very positive role model for the pupils. The school has been successful in its bid for a substantial grant



to develop basketball teaching. Pupils undertake the athletics five star award which contributes well to their progress. The school has taken advantage of the Top Play, Top Sport and Top Outdoors schemes in order to improve resources and staff training.

121. Co-ordination of physical education is satisfactory. Although the subject co-ordinator has not had any opportunity to observe lessons in order to establish standards, he looks at teachers' planning. He has started a portfolio of photographs which demonstrates accurately the standards of work achieved at each level.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

122. At the previous inspection, pupils' attainment was judged to be well below the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of both Key Stages. Inspection findings indicate that is attainment is now below the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. This is an improvement.
123. At Key Stage 1, pupils in Year 1 know that the Bible is a special book for Christians. They understand that Peter was a good friend to Jesus, and can talk satisfactorily about what friendship means to them. In response to the question, 'How can God be praised?' pupils' responses varied from 'going to church' to 'going to the sky to visit Him'. The majority of the Year 2 class was able to recall accurately the main aspects of the story of the Happy Prince and identify its message that people should work together and show respect for each other. However, many found it difficult to settle after the transition from one activity to another. A significant minority of pupils lost concentration easily and some chose not to join in parts of the lesson. Pupils know the story of Rama and Sita and can sequence the pictures correctly to re-tell the story, using their literacy skills satisfactorily to answer in complete phrases or sentences.
124. At Key Stage 2, pupils in the Year 3/4 class know and understand clearly the story of Martin Luther King as a person who challenged rules. In Year 5, the pupils learn to trust one another well as they guide each other blindfold from one point to another in the classroom. 'Newspaper reports' on the feeding of the five thousand demonstrate that the pupils have a good understanding of the story and are able to translate it correctly into modern terms. Pupils are able to give good reasons for honesty, such as 'people will trust you', and 'you will not get into trouble'. Discussion with pupils in Year 6 showed that, although they remember isolated stories from different religions and are able to remember some special places and some special days, they do not have a sound concept of any one particular faith or belief system.
125. Teaching is satisfactory overall so that, generally, pupils make satisfactory progress. However, the inattention and unsatisfactory behaviour of a significant minority of pupils in the two lessons seen at Key Stage 1 prevented them from making satisfactory progress and slowed the pace of the lessons. The good teaching seen in one lesson at Key Stage 2 enriched the pupils' learning, through the teacher's good subject knowledge and enthusiasm, and ensured the pupils' good attitudes and behaviour. Teachers enable pupils to have a good understanding of the focus of the lesson by sharing its purposes clearly with them. Revisiting of previous topics enables the pupils to remember what they have learned. Where time limits for activities are set, the pace of learning is good. The small amount of work recorded does not sufficiently reflect the time spent on the subject or accurately reflect the levels of pupils' learning. There are insufficient planned opportunities for assessment linked to the agreed syllabus.
126. The appointment of a co-ordinator with good subject knowledge has contributed to the improvement in standards. Many staff are still not confident in the teaching of religious education, although with the co-ordinator's support and good quality resources, this is improving. The teaching programme has been revised and is now firmly based on the Agreed Syllabus, addressing fully one of the Key Issues from the previous inspection. However, teaching plans do not follow

the teaching programme closely enough to ensure that the pupils acquire knowledge and understanding of different faiths to the required levels. The co-ordinator is aware that there is insufficient assessment of attainment and recording of pupils' progress within the subject. She has identified the need to raise the profile of religious education within the school improvement plan and improve training opportunities for staff. As yet she has had little opportunity to carry out her co-ordination role formally in order to establish firmly progress made by the pupils, or the standards of teaching they receive.