

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLYHEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wednesbury

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103927

Headteacher: Mrs H Bills

Reporting inspector: Mr D Gwinnett
16548

Dates of inspection: 5th – 8th June 2000

Inspection number: 215577

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Type of school: | Primary |
| School category: | Local Education Authority |
| Age range of pupils: | 3 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Holyhead Road Wednesbury West Midlands |
| Postcode: | WS10 7PZ |
| Telephone number: | 0121 556 0114 |
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| Appropriate authority: | Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr F Betteridge |
| Date of previous inspection: | 25-26 November 1997 |

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|-----------------|----------------------|---|---|
| Don Gwinnett | Registered inspector | Mathematics Information technology Art Design and technology | How high are standards How well are pupils taught How well is the school led and managed What should the school do to improve further |
| Rosalie Watkins | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils How well does the school work in partnership with parents |
| Catherine Davey | Team inspector | Under fives Equality of opportunity English Music Religious education | How good are curricular and other opportunities |
| Michael Mackay | Team inspector | Special educational needs English as an additional language Science Geography History Physical education | |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Holyhead Primary School is in the heart of the Black Country. The area served by the school is in the lowest seven per cent nationally for social and economic deprivation. It is an average sized primary school containing 191 pupils in Year Reception to Year 6, and an additional 46 part time pupils in the nursery. Around half the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is above the national average. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high. The proportion of pupils who leave the school or arrive in the middle of the year is also high. Attainment on entry to the school is significantly below average. The school is part of the Wednesbury Education Action Zone. The school was removed from special measures following its last inspection in November 1997.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Although the school attains below the national average at the end of both key stages, there is good value added to pupils' education when comparing their attainments on entry to their attainments when they leave at age 11, which are below national expectations in English but in line with national expectations in mathematics and science. Pupils have good attitudes to their work and most attend school regularly. They develop very good relationships with each other and teachers. The overall good teaching helps to motivate pupils and encourages them to learn well. Teaching support assistants and nursery nurses contribute successfully to pupils' learning. The well-balanced curriculum includes regular extra-curricular opportunities that enrich pupils' learning. There is good provision for the care and guidance of pupils, with good arrangements for assessing their progress. The results of assessments are satisfactorily used to improve the curriculum and teaching. Whilst the school keeps parents and carers informed through regular parents' evenings, reports are not always clear about how much progress pupils have made or what they need to do to improve. The management and leadership of the school are good. The school has responded well to the issues of the previous inspection. The income for each pupil is average. Overall, therefore, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress as a result of good teaching and regular monitoring of standards.
- The quality of teaching is good overall and is often very good.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher are good.
- The governing body has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school provide clear direction for the school and good support for the headteacher.
- Pupils have good attitudes to work, behave well and have very good relationships with each other and teachers.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities are good.
- The caring atmosphere and good management of behaviour create a positive learning environment in which pupils succeed.
- The relationships with the community and partner institutions have a very positive impact on pupils' learning

What could be improved

- Standards in English, particularly writing in Key Stage 2.
- Some aspects of the organisation of the nursery.

- The marking of pupils' work.
- Monitoring of teaching does not always identify occasional weaknesses.
- The management of provision for pupils who have English as an additional language.
- The timetabling of additional literacy sessions so that pupils only attend these during English lessons.
- The quality of pupils' annual reports.
- Parents' contribution to pupils' learning at school and at home.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

In its previous inspection of 1997, the school was found to provide a sound education, following an inspection in 1995 when it was put into special measures. Since then, there has been good improvement. The key issues of the previous inspection report have been rectified. The school is continuing to raise attainment, particularly in mathematics and science, which were both identified as having weaknesses. Although further opportunities have been provided to extend the range and quality of pupils' writing, standards are still not as high as they could be. Curriculum planning and the accuracy and use of assessment have improved with the result that there is better individual targeting of pupils across the attainment range. Teaching is now regularly and systematically monitored by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators. However, there are still occasional, unidentified weaknesses in teaching. The governing body effectively monitor the effects of their decisions in school and is closely involved in development planning. Overall, the school has responded well to the issues from the previous report and has a good capacity to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | | Key |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|--|
| | all schools | | | similar schools | |
| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 1999 | |
| English | D | E | E | E | well above A average above B average |
| mathematics | D | E | E | D | average C below average D well below E |
| science | D | E | E | C | average |

This information shows that standards in the 1999 national tests for 11-year-olds were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. This is because a higher than average proportion of pupils had special educational needs, with a majority of these on the higher stages of the Code of Practice. When compared to schools that have a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were well below average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science. In work seen during the

inspection in Year 6, attainment is below national expectations in English and in line with national expectations in mathematics and science. Pupils are meeting the targets set for them by the governing body and Local Education Authority. Standards in other subjects are in line with national expectations in all subjects except design technology where they are above. Overall, given the very low starting point of pupils on entry to the school, pupils make good progress and standards are high enough.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Good. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and to their work. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good. The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. A small minority causes occasional disruption in some classes. |
| Personal development and relationships | Good overall. Very good relationships with each other and teachers contribute positively to pupils' learning. However, some pupils do not show personal initiative and tend to rely too much on teachers. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory, although attendance is a little below the national average. |

A significant strength of the school is the very good relationships pupils have with each other and teachers. This results from the good management of pupils by teachers and has a positive effect on standards of learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

For children under the age of five, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall; no lessons were graded unsatisfactory and 50 per cent were graded good. In Key Stage 1 and 2, the overall quality of teaching is good. However, the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is better than in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, 90 per cent of lessons were graded good or very good and no lessons were graded unsatisfactory. This is a very high proportion of good and very good lessons. In Key Stage 2, 62 percent of lessons were graded good or very good and one design technology lesson, with the Year 6 class, was graded excellent. Good teaching of English and mathematics helps pupils to make good gains in their literacy and numeracy skills. The overall good teaching reflects well on pupils' learning across subjects, which is good overall. Three lessons, representing five per cent of those seen, were graded unsatisfactory. In these lessons, teachers did not use a wide enough range of teaching strategies to fire pupils' imaginations and expectations were too low.

Across the school, teachers manage pupils well. Most lessons are well planned and teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects they teach. Common problems in teaching include a lack of well-planned support across subjects for pupils' written work where expectations do not always reflect pupils' capabilities. Some marking does not help middle and higher attaining pupils to make quick enough progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Good. The quality and range of learning opportunities, including those provided in extra-curricular time, effectively promote active learning. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good. Specialist teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual Education Plans are effectively used by teachers. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Satisfactory. Specialist support for pupils whose first language is not English has only been provided very recently. A lack of a policy and the past lack of support for these pupils has held them back. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development and very good provision for their moral and social development. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Overall good. Monitoring of pupils' academic progress is good and satisfactory use is made of information about pupils' achievements to improve teaching. There is good monitoring of pupils' attendance. |

The school has good links with parents and is working with increasing success to improve and extend these links. However, parents do not contribute significantly to pupils' learning in school or at home. All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements. Pupils are effectively encouraged to contribute their own ideas about how the school could be improved. Pupils' work is regularly assessed using formal and informal methods.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Good The headteacher has a strategic vision for the school and provides strong leadership and management. Subject co-ordinators effectively monitor standards and plan effectively for improvement to their areas of responsibility. |
| How well the governors fulfil their | Good. The governing body fulfils its role well. They have improved since the last inspection and now have a clear |

| | |
|--|--|
| responsibilities | understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The school makes good use of available information from national curriculum test results. It evaluates its progress and sets realistic targets for future developments. |
| The strategic use of resources | Good. Resources are well managed and provide effective support for the developing curriculum. There is effective use of information technology across subjects. There are sufficient books, which are satisfactorily used to support learning. Available space is well used. |

There are sufficient teachers and classroom assistants, including special educational needs assistants, to support pupils' learning. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, with large teaching rooms. Improvements to the accommodation include new carpeting in teaching rooms and corridors and new lighting. The school strives to supply best value: good financial planning and effective procedures for the ordering and supply of goods ensure that funds are well used to improve standards. The school compares its performance with other schools and effectively listens to parents' views about how the school can be improved.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils like coming to school. • Pupils make good progress. • Behaviour is good • The quality of teaching is good. • The school listens well to suggestions or complaints. • Teachers have high expectations of pupils. • The school works closely with parents. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps pupils to become mature and responsible. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework required of pupils. • Information about how well their children are doing. • Provision for extra curricular activity. |

Inspectors' judgements support parents' largely positive views. During the inspection, teachers set homework regularly in most classes, although it is common for pupils not to complete homework or bring homework materials back to school. Inspectors feel that the three annual parents' evenings provide a satisfactory level of information regarding pupils' progress. However, the written reports do not say clearly enough how pupils have improved or what they need to do to improve further. Satisfactory provision of extra-curricular activity includes a range of sporting, environmental, musical and other cultural activities. There are regular beneficial visits to places of educational interest and visitors to the school effectively extend pupils' learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

THE SCHOOL'S RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery at aged three is significantly below expectations. Children's language and literacy skills are particularly poorly developed and this has a significantly adverse impact on their learning in all areas. When they join reception at aged four, pupils' attainment is still well below average. Baseline assessments conducted during pupils' reception year show that the attainment of pupils for the last three years is well below average, with a clear deterioration year-on-year. Baseline comparisons with other schools show that pupils' attainments in reading and mathematics are below other schools locally and well below schools nationally. Although their time in the nursery starts to improve children's early reading and mathematics skills, they arrive at the reception class without the skills one would expect for this age of child. This clearly confirms the view that children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below both national and local expectations.
2. There has been a vigorous response to the key issues and weaknesses relating to pupils' attainment from the previous inspection. In order to raise standards in all subjects, there has been close analysis of pupils' assessments, staff training in how to identify and challenge higher attainers, close monitoring by subject co-ordinators and use of staff meetings to scrutinise examples of good work. In mathematics, there has been a solid focus on "short burst" activities that stretch pupils' mental agility. To improve standards in both mathematics and science, all teachers have attended training, there has been additional training for the subject co-ordinators, who now closely monitor standards, and there has been an audit of all resources to ensure these match the needs of pupils across the age and attainment range. In order to improve the length and complexity of pupils' writing, all staff have attended training on extending pupils' creative writing, the subject co-ordinator has been on additional training, there have been key stage meetings to identify opportunities for extended writing and the length and complexity of pupils' writing is monitored by the subject co-ordinator. Additionally, all staff collate exemplars of extended writing to illustrate good practice. However, standards still fall below the national average at the end of both key stages, and there is still a particular concern about standards of writing in Key Stage 2. Nevertheless, taking individual cohorts of pupils' prior attainment into account, there is clear evidence of gradually improving standards, particularly in Key Stage 1 where the new methodologies are having an impact from the outset of pupils' school careers.
3. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 national tests, the mean points score was well below the national average in reading and below the national average in writing and mathematics. When compared to schools nationally that have a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, the school's mean points score was average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. Despite a clear decline in pupils' baseline score on entry to the school over the last three years, pupils' attainment in the Key Stage 1 national tests have improved by a margin that is well above the rate of improvement nationally. This is heartening for the school and shows that their assessment procedures are having a beneficial impact. The rate of improvement derives from careful analysis of pupils' baseline tests scores, and further

tests that are done at the end of the reception year and throughout the key stage. The amount of improvement between the beginning and the end of reception is carefully quantified and this provides data for individual pupils' targets in Year 1 and Year 2. All teachers measure pupils' progress regularly; they adjust their teaching and set new targets to take account of these measurements, and it is this good practice that is clearly having a positive effect on standards.

4. The targets set for the Key Stage 1 1999 tests were matched or exceeded in all the areas measured (reading, comprehension, spelling, writing and mathematics). The targets, which were agreed with the local education authority, and took careful account of pupils' previous academic circumstances, were realistic, but ambitious. The targets for the next two years have already been set. Whilst the school knows that the scores on entry are declining, they have nevertheless set targets that are above those of 1999. This shows that the school confidently expects improving systems of assessment, tied to monitoring of teaching and learning, to result in continued improvement.
5. Work seen in English during the inspection at the end of Key Stage 1 shows that standards are below the national expectations in reading, writing, speaking and listening but that pupils have made good progress from a very low starting base in the reception. In their speaking and listening, pupils progress well because teachers praise their efforts and help them to feel self-confident. Standards of reading and writing are also well taught, and this has a major impact on pupils' progress. In work seen in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are below national expectations. However, progress over time in mathematics is good. This is because pupils enter the school with very low scores in mathematics but make up lost ground throughout the key stage. In lessons seen, teachers carefully matched their expectations to the different groups of pupils. In this way, teachers plan to challenge all pupils from the highest to the lowest attainers so that all make good gains in their understanding. In science, most pupils are on course to match the expected Level 2 in the Key stage 1 teachers' assessment. Pupils are clearly beginning to understand how to apply strict criteria when conducting experiments, and use basic scientific terminology with improving confidence. Progress over time in science is good.
6. In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' mean points scores were well below the national average in each of the three areas of English, mathematics and science. When compared to schools nationally that have a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, the school's mean points score was well below average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science. These low scores, which were predicted by the school, are nevertheless a disappointment. Low scores resulted from the significantly higher than average proportion of pupils in this class who had special educational needs. Two pupils had statements of special educational needs, and nine were on the higher stages of the special educational needs Code of Practice. A further five pupils were on the first two stages of the Code of Practice, requiring them to have additional support for their learning. This means that half the pupils had special educational needs. The school provided compensatory booster classes in the evenings to try to improve standards, and the good use of assessment and target setting used in Key Stage 1 were also used in Key Stage 2. Whilst pupils' final scores were well below the national average, their progress was good when

bearing in mind their particular learning needs and prior levels of academic attainment. The low scores in 1998 also coincide with a cohort of pupils with a significantly higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs.

7. When comparing the 1999 Key Stage 2 test results with schools having a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, pupils' attainment was well below average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science. However, the proportion on the free meals register in last year's Year 6 was far higher than in the rest of the school and so these comparisons are not entirely accurate. The targets set for 1999 for Key Stage 2 were not reached in English, but were matched in mathematics and science. The targets were realistically pitched for this group of pupils, and have been set correspondingly higher in 2000 and 2001. Target setting carries on throughout Key Stage 2 with pupils sitting optional national tests at the end of each year. The results from these, as well as regular assessments carried out twice termly in the core subjects and termly in other subjects, provide data for target setting that is monitored by subject co-ordinators and the headteacher. This has helped the school to set individual learning goals for each pupil.
8. Work seen in English during the inspection at the end of Key Stage 2 shows that standards are below national expectations. Nevertheless, pupils' progress is good overall as a result of good teaching. The area of greatest weakness is pupils' writing, which shows unsatisfactory use of grammar and spelling and insufficient attention to extended writing. This is partly because written work in subjects other than English does not match pupils' capabilities. In work seen in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are in line with national expectations. Progress over time in mathematics is good. The proportion of pupils gaining Level 4 and above should at least match the national average in the national tests and could even exceed the national average if all goes well on the day. Pupils' own sense of self-confidence sometimes lets them down and they don't perform their best. In science, most pupils are on course to match the expected Level 4 when they sit the national tests. Pupils have a clear understanding how to conduct a fair test and convey accurate conclusions both verbally and in writing. Progress over time in science is good.
9. An analysis of the relative performance of boys and girls in Key Stage 1 between the years 1996 to 1999 shows that boys results are below those of girls. This corroborates the findings of the school. In order to compensate for this, additional books have been purchased that are of interest to boys and positive male role models are being sought to come into school to provide additional motivation and challenge for boys. There is a less noticeable gap between boys and girls in Key Stage 2.
10. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, reaching the targets specified for them in their Individual Education Plans. Pupils make good progress as a result of effective support by special educational needs support assistants and good targeting of pupils by class teachers. Whilst most support takes place within mainstream classes, small withdrawal groups are also arranged that help pupils to cope more satisfactorily with literacy and numeracy.

11. The children in the nursery who have English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening but do not make sufficient progress in mastering the early stages of reading and writing. The children in the reception class make better progress because the class teacher and the specialist teacher of English as an additional language work closely together to provide many opportunities for the children to practise new language skills. Nearly all pupils in Key Stage 1 who have English as an additional language make satisfactory or better progress because the specialist teacher makes good use of the class teachers' planning. The work she does with pupils helps them with the rest of their learning. Most of the Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress. The teachers work hard to adapt their teaching for pupils with language problems. However, the specialist teacher does not have enough time to work with all the classes in the school and so some pupils do not progress as well as they otherwise would.
12. The National Literacy Strategy, introduced a year early in 1997, has had a beneficial impact on standards. Pupils respond well to the added emphasis placed on speaking and listening skills. Teachers realise that further emphasis needs to be placed on written work, since pupils in Key Stage 2 still lack confidence. There is insufficient emphasis on written work in the other subjects of the curriculum where some work does not match pupils' capabilities. The National Numeracy Strategy has also had a beneficial impact. Pupils enjoy the emphasis on mental maths and use the new materials confidently. Teachers have adjusted well to the new expectations.
13. Pupils' aged under five make satisfactory progress over time and pupils in Key stages 1 and 2 make good progress. Attainment in information technology is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages and improving rapidly as a result of good subject co-ordination. Recent investment in new computers is having a beneficial impact on pupils' progress, and a new computer suite is being built that will contain fifteen more computers. Teachers have received additional training in the use of computers and more is planned. Attainment in religious education is satisfactory at the end of both key stages. Standards in design and technology are above expectations at the end of both key stages. This is because of very good planning and good quality teaching in many of the classes. Standards in other subjects are broadly in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards in all other subjects are in line with national expectations except in art and history, where they are below. This is because pupils are still making up ground from their very low starting point. No judgement can be made about standards in geography because insufficient work was seen.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

14. Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour contribute positively to their progress in learning. They usually come happily to school. They relate very well to each other and to teaching and non-teaching staff, reflecting the expectations and example presented to them. This results in the school being an orderly and friendly community. These findings are similar to the findings of the previous inspection.

15. Pupils of all ages and abilities respond well to teachers' clear expectations regarding behaviour and attention to work. Even nursery children behave well, although their ability to relate to each other tends to be limited. Throughout the school, pupils usually settle down quickly at the start of a lesson, listen carefully to their teacher, and concentrate well on tasks. They sensibly undertake responsibilities such as tidying away resources. At times, particularly when teaching is especially good, pupils become really well involved. For instance, in a Year 2 music lesson they were very well motivated and thoroughly enjoyed using percussion to achieve particular effects. Older ones show particular eagerness to improve in lessons and voluntary sessions of dance. Year 6 pupils speak enthusiastically of the booster classes that most attend voluntarily on Saturday mornings. A few pupils find it hard to always work properly, but, because of very effective management by their teachers, even these generally persevere. Infrequently, attitudes and behaviour in a lesson become unsatisfactory. This links to a few occasions when the teacher fails to engage pupils in interesting and purposeful work.
16. Aided by the example of teachers, pupils respect each other's different customs and beliefs. This was apparent in one class when pupils listened with interest and respect to a Moslem boy and girl explaining what happens at the Mosque. In assembly, they recognise that people are dependent on each other and should work as a team, although many find it hard to volunteer their own thoughts about this.
17. Pupils who have special educational needs enjoy work because it is interesting and relevant to their needs. These pupils have good levels of self-esteem because they feel that the teachers and the learning support assistants care about them and want them to do well. Most pupils who have special educational needs, therefore, work hard to improve, and remain cheerful and confident. Pupils who have English as an additional language work hard and join in all the activities planned for other pupils. They are confident learners of English and they are proud of the progress they make in their learning. They make good use their growing knowledge and understanding of English to help them learn in other subjects. The school successfully encourages all pupils, whatever their language background, to work and play happily together.
18. Behaviour at playtimes, which is as good as during lessons, has improved considerably during recent years. Examples of positive care and support for others include older pupils helping to care for younger ones. Pupils from different racial backgrounds are well integrated. At lunchtime, pupils show respect for the supervisors, who keep good standards of behaviour by successfully managing the few who become over-boisterous. Only rarely does individual behaviour becomes sufficiently unacceptable for short-term exclusion to become necessary. There were no long term or permanent exclusions in the year before the inspection.
19. Attendance is satisfactory overall, although a little below the national average. Most pupils come to school regularly, arriving punctually each morning. However, despite efforts made by the school, a few pupils from homes where education has a low priority are often absent or late, and this interferes with their learning. Since parents provide plausible excuses for absence, no unauthorised absence is recorded. During

the months leading up to the inspection several pupils who went on extended family holidays caused a significant drop in overall attendance.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT

20. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages and has improved since the last inspection, when eight out of ten lessons were satisfactory, but only occasional lessons were good. The quality of teaching is now satisfactory or better in over nine out of ten lessons, with seven out of ten lessons graded good or very good. One design technology lesson in Year 6 was graded excellent as a result of the teachers' infectious enthusiasm and innovative planning. Only three lessons, representing five per cent of those seen, were graded unsatisfactory. Each of these was in the middle years of Key Stage 2. There was a particularly high proportion of above average teaching in Key Stage 1 where nine out of ten lessons were good or very good.
21. The weaknesses identified in teaching during the previous inspection have been resolved. Improved use of collaborative tasks leading to investigative work is particularly noticeable in science and design technology. Teachers help pupils to become independent learners by setting them tasks that they work on by themselves and by encouraging them to research using computers. At the time of the last inspection, some teaching was over directive, taking individual initiative or enterprise away from pupils. This has been improved, although pupils are still quite cautious and tend to keep checking that they are doing tasks properly. Use of assessment by teachers has improved, although marking of pupils' work does not always extend middle and higher attaining pupils. Regular twice-termly assessments in the core subjects and termly assessments in all other subjects provide clear indications of pupils' progress. The results of these assessments are increasingly well used to plan the next stage of learning.
22. The quality of teaching for pupils under five is satisfactory overall with consistently good and sometimes very good teaching in the reception class. In the nursery, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and is occasionally good. All teachers create a warm and welcoming atmosphere in which children feel valued and supported. This is the reason they are happy to come to school. However, the daily planning in the nursery is too general, with tasks that do not always extend all pupils. In the reception, planning is very clear and extends all pupils, irrespective of their prior attainment. The learning environment in the nursery is not sufficiently stimulating.
23. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good overall. This is because teachers make effective use of what they know about pupils to plan special work for them. Most teachers provide clear advice and guidance to classroom learning assistants. This helps them to support the pupils well in class lessons or in small groups withdrawn from the classroom for work in literacy and numeracy. Teachers and classroom assistants provide good opportunities for pupils who have physical disabilities to take a full part in lessons and other activities. However, some Individual Education Plans are not clear enough about what the pupils should know or be able to do, or how the work should be taught. When this happens the pupils do not learn as well they should.

24. The teaching done by the specialist teacher of English as an additional language is good. She accurately assesses how much English the pupils have and plans lessons accordingly to help pupils move quickly to the next stage of learning. She expects pupils to concentrate, listen carefully and practise hard. This helps them to become confident learners. Most class teachers work hard to adapt their teaching to the needs of these pupils, although lack of sufficient help and advice until very recently has limited teachers' effectiveness. Nevertheless, they pay special attention to difficult or unfamiliar words that pupils need in other subjects, such as science and history.
25. Teachers' subject knowledge is good in both key stages. Teachers increasingly take each other's classes in their specialist subjects. When this happens, for instance in music, religious education and PE, pupils make faster progress. Teachers use information technology confidently. This was very apparent in the Year 6 class where the teacher responded knowledgeably to the many questions being asked about publishing text and graphics on the Internet. She not only deftly answered pupils' questions but also skilfully anticipated the next question, leading pupils on very quickly and making them thirsty for more.
26. All teachers have received effective training in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The basic skills required for reading, writing and mathematics are confidently taught. Teachers use a successful blend of methods, such as phonic recognition and context clues, when reading, and effectively adjust teaching to compensate for the full age and ability range. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, for instance, the teacher fired questions to particular pupils; lower attainers were asked to add 2p and 5p together, whilst higher attaining pupils were asked to add 10p and 7p. By calling out individual pupils to answer, the teacher made sure that all pupils stayed on task and enjoyed the session. Whilst literacy skills are reinforced in other lessons such as geography, history and religious education, the demands on pupils are sometimes too low. This is one of the reasons that pupils in Key Stage 2 do not make enough progress in their written work. Whilst teachers reinforce pupils' mathematics skills in other subjects, for instance by weighing and measuring in science and design technology, the level of demand is also below pupils' capabilities. Sometimes, opportunities are missed. In a design technology lesson in Key Stage 2, for instance, pupils designed logos for T-shirts. They could have been asked to estimate the market demand for particular designs on T-shirts by doing a questionnaire. This would have introduced relative proportions and fractions, which the class had been doing in mathematics lessons, but this link was not made and the chance was lost to increase pupils' mathematical understanding.
27. Teachers' short and medium term planning is detailed in both key stages. Planning is closely monitored by subject co-ordinators and the headteacher to ensure even coverage of the National Curriculum. Following monitoring, the curriculum is adjusted. This means that there is continual refinement of what is taught and learning proceeds at a productive pace. Teachers plan for work not to be repeated unnecessarily. This helps to make learning smooth and minimises discontinuity to pupils' progress. Teachers' planning effectively considers the separate needs of pupils of different prior attainment. In most lessons, teachers ensure that higher and lower attaining pupils each make good progress in their learning.

28. The range of teaching methods is good in both key stages. Teachers carefully group pupils according to their prior levels of attainment in most subjects. In practical subjects such as art and music, greater flexibility of grouping supports pupils' social development. Classroom support assistants and volunteers are effectively used to help lower attaining pupils and to provide additional stimulus to learning. Consequently, pupils receive a good level of individual support that helps them sustain concentration and effort. There are regular opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas and opinions. For instance, in a class assembly in Year 3, pupils were asked to name any personal qualities they had which were special. This gave good opportunities for reflective talk, helping the pupils to develop their self-confidence. In practical lessons, such as art or design technology, teachers expect pupils to think about what they are doing by grappling with the intellectual challenges presented by the work. For instance, in the reception, pupils had to join fabrics together using different methods, such as glueing, stitching and stapling. They had to discuss which was best and why. This made them think clearly and express their thoughts, as well as helping them to develop manipulative skills.
29. Management of pupils' behaviour is very good in Key Stage 1 and good in key Stage 2. Teachers remain calm and assured, even when pupils become agitated or noisy. Classroom assistants are used effectively to support those who misbehave. Effective management is helped by teachers' good classroom organisation. Teachers keep rooms tidy, know where to find resources and expect pupils to return things to their right place at the end of lessons. This creates an orderly learning atmosphere in which pupils do things in a methodical way. Teachers hold pupils' attention by altering the tone of their voice and engaging pupils in a variety of activities that keeps up the pace. Teachers ensure that lessons are well timed to cover all the necessary aspects. This helps pupils to be self-controlled, understanding what they are doing and how well they are doing it.
30. Teachers make good use of resources. Available computers are well used to support learning across a broad range of subjects. Available books are well used for individual research, but also in a planned way to ensure that all pupils develop new ideas and understanding in a thorough and systematic way. Classrooms have a suitable range of fiction and non-fiction, and there is satisfactory use of the library for leisure reading and to stimulate individual inquiry. Other adults effectively support learning. All adults have a good knowledge of individual pupils' needs, which they use well to target learning. There is good use of available space: classrooms have areas of particular interest to spark pupils' imaginations, and display effectively celebrates and reinforces pupils' efforts.
31. Teachers' day to day assessment of pupils is regular and positive, although marking does not always tell middle and higher attaining pupils what they have to do to improve. This means that some able pupils have lots of ticks, but aren't challenged to work harder. However, teachers are attentive to pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar when marking subjects other than English. This helps to reinforce pupils' literacy skills and helps them become more self-critical of their work. Teachers do not always tell pupils what level they are working at and so pupils are not always sure

how they compare with each other and pupils in other schools. Homework is satisfactorily used to support what happens in class. Although parents were anxious about the amount of homework, inspectors saw it being set regularly. However, not all pupils complete the homework or return the homework materials promptly.

32. The quality of learning is good in both key stages. Scrutinies of pupils' work shows that they make good progress in each key stage, and this is backed up by inspectors' observations in classrooms. Factors that produce good learning include the positive atmosphere in most rooms, with very good relationships between pupils and with teachers, and pupils' eagerness to learn. Most of Year 6 returns on Saturday mornings for extra lessons because they want to do well in their national tests. This is also because teachers help learning to be enjoyable during the week. Because most pupils are willing to learn without close supervision, lessons proceed in an orderly way with pupils applying intellectual, physical or creative effort. Pupils spoken to about their learning agree that they are making good progress and are able to say why. In a conversation with Year 6 pupils, for instance, they said that the teachers' own enthusiasm helped them to learn well. They explained what new knowledge they had gained in information technology and accurately compared this to what they knew a term ago.

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

33. The school provides a good, broad and balanced curriculum, which includes all subjects of the National Curriculum. Statutory requirements are fully met including those for religious education and acts of worship. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection. Good opportunities are now provided for pupils to work together collaboratively, short term planning is more consistent across the school, and teachers' evaluations of lessons are used more effectively to plan future work. A more suitable time allocation is now provided for subjects to be taught to an appropriate depth. Although the effectively implemented literacy and numeracy hours are beginning to have an impact on standards, insufficient emphasis is given to the use of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. This is particularly evident in the use of extended writing.
34. There is very good provision for health education including sex and drugs education. These are taught mainly through the science curriculum, but are also included during a Health Week when the school nurse and dentist provide specialist help. The school is currently receiving valuable support through their involvement with the Heart Start Project, aimed at raising pupils' awareness of the need for a healthy diet and regular exercise. The good provision for personal education includes opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning through group and individual activities. Very good systems are in place to reward pupils for personal effort, and teachers place heavy emphasis on building pupils' self esteem. Residential trips provide further opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. Nevertheless pupils get few opportunities, other than those provided by the school, to extend their own personal development.

35. Longer term planning for the under fives indicates breadth and balance and appropriately incorporates the Desirable Learning Objectives. The school is currently updating the under fives curriculum to include new Foundation Stage developments. Plans are effectively shared with the well-informed assistants. There is appropriate emphasis on practical and play activities. These effectively develop children's independence skills. However, some of the activities in the nursery occupy the children rather than enabling them to develop their skills, and daily lesson intentions are often too broad and do not always meet the specific needs of individual children.
36. Although most pupils have equal opportunity to access the whole curriculum, provisions for pupils for whom English is an additional language are only just being implemented and are not fully in place. Provision of additional literacy support results in the occasional withdrawal of pupils with special educational needs from lessons other than English. The school is aware that this is less than satisfactory.
37. The school ensures that pupils with special educational needs participate in lessons in every subject. Pupils work alongside other pupils in lessons but usually have specially adapted tasks to help them complete their work successfully. The school provides extra support in literacy and mathematics lessons. Sometimes the teaching is done in small withdrawal groups where there are fewer distractions and support assistants can work intensively on practising basic language and number skills. Pupils who have English as an additional language join in all the learning activities. The special language teacher is particularly helpful in ensuring that pupils benefit from lessons in all subjects. For example, she gives them the confidence to ask questions when they do not understand teachers' explanations or instructions. However, the school has not yet considered how it can adapt the curriculum so that pupils take full advantage of this recent provision. Teachers encourage special educational needs pupils and those with additional language needs to take a full part in other opportunities offered by the school such as after-school dance clubs and extra lessons on Saturday mornings.
38. Policy documents and schemes of work are in place for most curriculum areas. These provide a logical sequence to the teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding. Key stage teachers plan work together and these plans are then monitored by curriculum managers. Teachers' own evaluations of their planning are enabling them to modify their work in the light of experience. Aims of daily lessons are effectively displayed so that pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Although the school uses the literacy and numeracy strategies to plan much of its work for English and mathematics, lack of a whole school plan results in missed opportunities to teach literacy and numeracy to an appropriate depth in other subjects across the curriculum. The school uses information technology effectively in much of its work and this is proving especially effective in enhancing pupils' learning in literacy. Planning for religious education is effectively related to the Locally Agreed Syllabus and parents are appropriately informed of their rights of withdrawal.
39. There is a satisfactory range of extra curricular activities. These include football and karate, dance, massed choir singing and playing, and booster classes for Year 6, which are very well attended. The provision of specialist teaching such as that for recorder and dance, as well as for gymnastics and football, greatly enhances pupils' learning.

Very high standards of performance were seen from boys as well as girls when they performed dance routines for the rest of the school. These pupils have performed at the Millennium Dome. Very good links with the community have been established, including those with local businesses who have been generous in their support for the school. Members of the local clergy visit school regularly and visits include those to local places of interest. Links with local schools are very effective. These include the sharing of teachers' expertise, joint training for staff and attendance by pupils at massed choir and dance events along with other schools. The school regularly participates in team games such as football.

40. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development, and good provision for their spiritual and cultural development. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Provision for spiritual development includes opportunities for pupils to listen to and respond to music, as was evident in a Year 2 lesson when pupils selected and played instruments sensitively to represent the sound of a rippling stream, and then evaluated their own performance. Good opportunities are provided in art when pupils study the works of famous artists such as Matisse and then attempt to emulate his style in their own work. Awe and wonder are evident when pupils listen to teachers' expressive reading of stories and poetry, and humour is used effectively to evoke a joyful response from pupils.
41. Pupils enter school with very poor social skills. It is to the school's credit that, by the time they leave, pupils co-operate and collaborate very well in class and group sessions, they show courtesy and respect towards others, and offer help and assistance in lessons. A good example occurred during a literacy lesson in Year 4 when more able pupils spontaneously helped the less able with their reading. Pupils' social conscience is aroused through opportunities to study the effects of litter and pollution on the environment, and pupils show an awareness of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves by assisting with fund-raising for various charities.
42. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development. The principles of right and wrong are clearly understood and teachers have very high expectations of behaviour both in and around school. Pupils behave well in lessons and soon settle to tasks without disruption. The behaviour policy is clearly displayed and understood by all and teachers ensure pupils understand the consequences of their own actions. Teachers often read stories to their class containing moral themes, and daily assemblies often include moral issues. Pupils who make extra effort to demonstrate good behaviour are rewarded, and the very good strategies for raising pupils' self esteem make a positive contribution to their moral development.
43. Good provision is made for pupils' cultural development, which includes the sensitive teaching of customs and beliefs other than pupils' own. Good use is made of pupils' knowledge of their own culture. For example, during a religious education lesson on sacred books, Muslim pupils talked about the significance of the Qu'ran in their own religion. Festivals and celebrations associated with other cultures are explored. As a result, pupils learned about The Chinese New Year celebrations and then used this knowledge to make an effective dragon display. Pupils have opportunities to explore their own cultural heritage and have visited places of interest within and around the local community as part of history and geography topics.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. Very good procedures for managing pupils' behaviour are followed very effectively. Good, caring provision is made for pupils' educational guidance, personal development and welfare. Procedures for assessing their work have improved since the previous inspection and are now good.
45. Staff understand the disadvantaged home circumstances of a high proportion of pupils and show a good, caring approach. This understanding is reflected in the quality of personal support pupils receive and in the way they are helped to understand how they should behave. All staff follow systems for managing behaviour very successfully, both in lessons and at playtime. Awards and words of encouragement are used well to foster good behaviour. The behaviour-tracking sheet, which provides a good record of unsatisfactory behaviour, is linked to a well-structured system of sanctions that are used when required to reinforce expectations. Exclusion is rightly regarded as a last resort, but is used appropriately when rare poor behaviour occurs. There are no reports of bullying, but staff are ready to respond effectively, should such concerns arise.
46. The school cares well for pupils who have special educational needs. It quickly finds out their learning problems, then plans lessons that help them learn more effectively. The teachers meet regularly to check that what they do works well. They give good help and advice to the classroom support assistants so that they work well. The teachers regularly check that individual learning plans meet pupils' needs. The school has good links with organisations that help the school. For example, it works closely with the visiting teacher from the Hearing Impaired Service and with the educational psychologist. This means that the school can quickly draw on expert advice to help it improve pupils' learning. The school makes sure that pupils who have English as an additional language feel happy and safe. It makes good use of the specialist teacher to help identify what pupils know about English and how well they use it. However, the care the school gives these pupils is limited. Teachers have not had sufficient training in to meet these pupils' needs and there is no overall plan to systematically improve support arrangements.
47. Routines for assessing pupils' work have improved since the previous inspection, and are now good, with satisfactory use being made of the information collected. Agreed, well-established systems result in individual folders of annotated work samples for tracking pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. Subject co-ordinators compile portfolios with samples of work. Reference is already made to these in planning and good plans are in hand to increase their usefulness by further annotating the work. Statutory and other assessments are carried out, with instances of good analysis of these, for example in mathematics, to identify and improve areas of the curriculum where teaching and learning are weak. Good plans are in hand to extend the use of such analyses.
48. Educational guidance is good. Every week, teachers share specific learning targets with their class, so that pupils know what they must aim to achieve and can judge their progress towards this. Their willingness to learn is encouraged by teachers'

expectations and by the way special efforts are recognized, for instance in the weekly awards assembly.

49. Good steps are taken to monitor and improve attendance and punctuality. The school is aware that excuses given for some absences may not be genuine, even though it is difficult to find secure grounds to challenge parents about this. Staff follow up such absences carefully, receiving good support from the education welfare officer. There are also appropriate links with a local truancy watch scheme. Good arrangements for contacting parents on the first day of their child's absence were not operating at the time of the inspection due to non-availability of staff.
50. Good attention is given to other aspects of pupil support. Suitable routines are in place to care for any pupils who become sick or injured in school. There is a good understanding of child protection matters and very good attention given to such concerns when they arise. Appropriate attention is paid to aspects of health and safety, including risk assessment. The school is already aware of possible hazards, such as an inward-opening exit door to the nursery.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. Parents are broadly supportive of the school. They recognise recent improvements, such as the better standards of work now produced by their children. They feel that teachers now listen to them, and that they are more welcoming than when the school was previously inspected. The number of parents attending events such as the Christmas concerts has greatly increased.
52. Efforts to inform and involve parents have successfully improved home-school relationships. There is a good flow of information about school events and routines in regular newsletters. The school successfully perseveres in attempts to increase all parents' understanding and interest in its work. Recently for instance, with much encouragement by teachers, virtually all families sent their children to school suitably dressed to join in a 'millennium timeline' of people through the ages. Routines are insufficiently developed for giving parents advance information about the work their children tackle. For instance, curriculum planning, which was available to the small number of parents who attended a 'bring a parent to school' day, was not distributed to parents who did not attend. However, plans are already in hand to produce such information for the parents of the youngest pupils.
53. Teachers' efforts mean that most parents come to the three consultation meetings held during the year. Despite this, a significant minority of parents would like more information about the progress their children make. Inspectors feel that whilst parents' evenings are regular and informative, annual reports do not contain enough detail. They give an adequate picture of what pupils do, with good detail in English, mathematics and science, but do not say enough about the progress pupils have made during the year, or suggest targets for future learning. They lack comparisons with what other pupils in the class achieve and with national expectations. The school works closely with the parents of pupils who have special educational needs. It tells parents what it is doing to improve pupils' learning and invites them to review

sessions to decide whether changes are needed to the way pupils are supported. The school keeps in regular contact with the parents of pupils who have English as an additional language. It make good use of the specialist teacher, who speaks Hindi, to help it overcome the occasional language problem between the school and parents.

54. In contrast to the parents who want more information, a significant number of parents show little wish to help with their children's learning. For instance, teachers find it disheartening that some parents do not return books that their children bring home. Whilst some parents of reception pupils contribute to the 'home report' books sent home every week to share targets for learning, others do not respond. Teachers have recently introduced a new reading record book, in which parents can enter their own comments, but the use of this is not yet properly established.
55. Governors achieve extremely good attendance at their annual meeting, by holding it on the same evening as the popular Christmas concert. However the governors' annual report does not provide all the required information.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides decisive direction for the work of the school, and has done much to continue the improvements that helped the school to be removed from special measures at the last inspection. She has clearly identified factors that will take the school forward. She shares this understanding with the staff and governing body, who support and complement her skills. There is a pervasive ethos of purposefulness that inspires confidence and loyalty. The sense of forward direction is well received by parents who feel that the school is well led and managed. There is clear delegation to staff with responsibilities who contribute well to the good strategic management of the school. The management of special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator works closely with staff, parents and outside agencies. Relevant advice and support are available and the systems of record keeping are efficient and thorough. The response to the previous inspection was effective. The three key issues relating to management; extending the role of subject co-ordinators, continuing direct monitoring of teaching and extending the monitoring activities of governors, were included in the subsequent action plan. However, monitoring of teaching, whilst well established, does not identify all weaknesses. In other respects, each area has been successfully addressed, with a review of the action plan targets at each meeting of the full governing body.
57. The governing body is energetic, committed and well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The main governors' committee and the six sub committees are well attended, keep accurate minutes of meetings and discuss matters in an open way. Whilst wholly supportive, they hold the headteacher to account, questioning her and other staff about the impact of decisions on the workings of the school. The chair of the governing body takes a critical interest in what happens in school and successfully directs the work of the governors so that they operate well as a unified team. Statutory requirements are nearly all met, although minor matters of required information including the most recent annual report of the governing body,

some arrangements for disabled pupils and a list of professional development undertaken by staff have been omitted. However, none of these matters adversely effect the standards of pupils' work. Governors are increasingly effective in the way they monitor the results of their decisions in school. Named governors have responsibility for special educational needs, child protection, literacy and numeracy. These governors, as well as others, visit the school to find out first hand what is happening. This helps them to make well-informed decisions and provides mutually beneficial links with teaching and non-teaching staff.

58. Subject co-ordinators manage their areas of responsibility well. This is because it is accepted practice for co-ordinators to monitor standards in their subjects. Co-ordinators have release time to monitor the quality of teaching and to work alongside colleagues needing support. However, weaknesses in teaching are not always identified or rectified. This is why a small proportion of teaching observed by inspectors was unsatisfactory. Subject co-ordinators also monitor the delivery of the curriculum by collecting in colleagues' planning. Consequently, whilst the National Curriculum is well covered in both key stages, there is no unnecessary duplication of what is taught. This means that pupils' time is not wasted. Co-ordinators also take a responsibility for collecting in teachers' assessments of pupils' progress and samples of marked work in order to promote consistency of practice across the school. This helps co-ordinators to adjust what is taught so that teachers are effective in addressing the needs of all pupils. The work of subject co-ordinators is closely monitored by the headteacher using low, medium or high level monitoring strategies. Subject co-ordinators appreciate that they are accountable for their areas of responsibility and accept that monitoring has a beneficial impact on standards and on their own professional practice.
59. The headteacher is the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. She makes sure that all identified pupils have special learning plans to guide the teachers' work. She checks that teachers use these plans well to improve pupils' reading and writing and learning in other subjects. The school spends the special educational needs allocation wisely. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs visits the school regularly, meets with the headteacher to check that the school's arrangements work well and reports back to the governing body. The management of English as an additional language is unsatisfactory. There is no identified co-ordinator or policy governing provision. Teachers have not had sufficient guidance on what more they could do to improve the teaching of these pupils. The recent influx of pupils with additional language needs has prompted the school towards better management arrangements, which it takes seriously. The headteacher has made a successful bid for extra funds and this area of provision is being reviewed. Available funds are used to pay for the work of the specialist teacher who visits the school for one day each week.
60. The school's aims are clearly stated in the prospectus. They aptly summarise existing practice, giving equal weight to pupils' academic, social and individual needs. The commitment to equality of opportunity is evident in the life of the school. No child is denied access to any part of the school curriculum, and pupils needing compensatory support are provided with this. However, it is unsatisfactory that some pupils are removed from lessons other than English for extra help with literacy. This denies them adequate time in other lessons. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, for instance, some

pupils were removed for half an hour for extra literacy support. During this time they missed important work in mathematics. The aims to develop pupils' sense of justice, fair play, racial tolerance and co-operation are evident in the very good interpersonal relationships they enjoy with each other and adults.

61. The school makes effective use of information derived from national tests and other regular assessments to set targets, which it monitors. Of particular use are the nationally recognized tests that are used twice in the reception and at regular intervals as pupils move through the school. This provides valuable comparisons with schools nationally and builds into a valuable profile detailing pupils' progress. These tests, the national tests and very regular testing of the core and foundation subjects enable the school to set targets, which it reviews regularly. This use of testing, target setting and review is a cogent illustration of the way the school attempts to meet its first two aims of encouraging pupils to reach the highest possible standards and developing awareness of the individual needs of each child.
62. The school development planning is detailed and successfully emphasises those aspects that will have a direct bearing on improved standards of pupils' work. In the current plan, for instance, there is a focus on raising boys' attainment, which is an issue of concern in Key Stage 1, following the most recent national tests. As a result, books have been purchased that are attractive to boys, and good male role models are being sought who can confront the "learning isn't cool" mentality. The main targets of the development plan are agreed well in advance of their implementation. This allows all staff and governors adequate time for consultation. The format of planning is clear; in addition to the planning targets and person responsible, timescales and costings are interwoven and milestone dates for reviewing the success of the plan, support stated success criteria. A particularly helpful feature of development planning is the production of a development planning calendar that lists all areas to be monitored over a three year period. This contains a dual focus incorporating both subject monitoring and whole-school policy monitoring. This calendar shows at a glance which aspects of the school's practice are due for review and improvement.
63. Financial planning successfully supports school initiatives. Crucially, development planning and financial planning are well integrated. For instance, good planning for the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has ensured financial support for the extra staff training and resources needed to launch the schemes successfully. The finance committee includes governors from each of the other main sub committees. This ensures a good cross flow of information that informs the processes of financial planning. The dates of meetings are strategically placed to ensure that the necessary information from other committees feeds the finance committee before it makes recommendations to the full governors' meeting. The school buys into the Local Education Authority Financial Services scheme. As a result, a qualified Budget Officer provides regular and helpful advice to the governing body, headteacher and administrative staff. The setting of the budget is done well in advance so that planning priorities are effectively integrated. Specific grants are used effectively for their intended purposes. There has been adequate support to sustain improvements to the teaching of information technology. Available funds have been

used to procure additional new computers and current plans for developing a computer suite have been carefully costed.

64. The school has sufficient staff to deliver the planned curriculum and there are sufficient non-teaching staff to support pupils' learning. These include sufficient trained nursery nurses for the youngest pupils and special needs support assistants for those requiring individual help. Teachers are all appropriately qualified and there is a good mix of longer serving and newer teachers. Staff receive a sound induction following their arrival, and there is suitable planning and support to ensure that student teachers receive effective training in job skills. All staff receive good quality performance reviews and benefit from regularly well-planned in service training. The school has sufficient resources for its work. The ratio of books to pupils is satisfactory and there is a good range of different kinds of books to interest the age and ability range, as well as both boys and girls. The school library is well stocked and contains books that celebrate the rich cultural diversity found in the school. There is an average number of computers for a school of this size and these are well used by teachers across the subjects of the curriculum. There is insufficient outdoor play equipment for the nursery. This limits the development of children's physical skills.
65. The spacious accommodation has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Large sized classrooms that allow for regrouping for different activities contain attractive displays of pupils' work and various artefacts to stimulate interest and discussion. The latter provide good stimulation for developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. Suitable interest corners successfully focus on current aspects of topic work. Good quality carpeting, and recently improved lighting, make classrooms comfortable places in which to teach and learn. Corridors and walkways have been made more attractive through bright painting, carpeting and curtains. The entrance area is attractive and sets the tone for the rest of the school. The school is well decorated and cared for. Good use of space includes the attractive cloakrooms outside each classroom that have been imaginatively decorated to illustrate particular historical themes. The setting up of a community room that is well used during the school day and evenings helps to secure closer working links with parents, volunteers and outside agencies. The school has a satisfactory school field that is level and well drained and the playground has suitable markings for games and activities. The school grounds are being imaginatively developed with an urban forest and nature area. These are having a positive effect on pupils' environmental and science education.
66. The governing body appreciates the need for judicious investment of its financial resources and assesses the impact of its spending on standards. Governors are very aware of the performance of the school and its reputation in the community. Parents affirm that the school is much better regarded nowadays than it used to be. The school compares its performance against other schools nationally and against local schools in order to determine whether it should be doing better. Advice from parents is sought and acted upon. The school acts on advice from the Local Education Authority regarding budgetary matters and ensures that competitive quotes are obtained so that good value is obtained when purchasing goods. Consequently, it has economic, effective and efficient service from providers. The school ensures that no child is denied access to school trips or other extension activities as a result of family

hardship. Parents are consulted and informed about the curriculum and other matters, although annual reports are not as detailed as they should be. Overall, the school successfully strives to provide best value. Financial control is good. Systematic processing of accounts and clear procedures for the ordering and supply of goods are well administered by secretarial staff. The most recent audit was complimentary about school systems. The headteacher and governing body are shrewd and are alert to new opportunities for improving provision and practice in the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. In order to improve standards the governing body should:

- Improve attainment in written English by:
 - developing more effective strategies in both key stages for teaching literacy across the subjects of the curriculum. (paragraphs 8, 12, 26, 33, 38, 77, 87)
 - encouraging pupils to write in greater length and complexity. (paragraphs 2, 8, 33, 84)
- Improve provision in the nursery by:
 - ensuring that planning and teaching provides suitable academic challenge. (paragraphs 22, 35, 71, 72, 73, 75)
 - making the learning environment more attractive. (paragraphs 22, 70)
 - providing more large outside play equipment. (paragraphs 64, 74)
- Improve teaching by ensuring that all marking tells pupils how to improve. (paragraphs 21, 31, 86)
- Improve the management of the school by:
 - ensuring that monitoring of teaching identifies any weaknesses. (paragraphs 57, 58, 76, 87)
 - improving the strategic management of English as an additional language. (paragraphs 37, 46, 59)
 - ensuring that the governing body annual report contains all required information. (paragraphs 55, 57)
- Improve equality of opportunity by not removing pupils for literacy support from lessons other than English. (paragraphs 36, 60)
- Improve the school's links with parents by:
 - ensuring that reports to parents provide more details about how pupils have progressed and what they need to do to improve further. (paragraphs 53, 66)
 - further encouraging parents to contribute to pupils' learning at school and at home. (paragraphs 54)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 60 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 36 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 1.7 | 18.3 | 50 | 25 | 5 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

| | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|--|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 24 | 192 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | | 73 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

| | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 0 | 4 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 3 | 67 |

English as an additional language

| | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 28 |

Pupil mobility in the last school year on form S2

| | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 27 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 10 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 7.0 |
| National comparative data | 5.4 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.0 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

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 | 1999 | 17 | 15 | 32 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 13 | 12 | 13 |
| | Girls | 13 | 12 | 14 |
| | Total | 26 | 24 | 27 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 81 (68) | 75 (64) | 84 (68) |
| | National | 82 (80) | 83 (80) | 87 (84) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 12 | 14 | 13 |
| | Girls | 13 | 14 | 13 |
| | Total | 25 | 28 | 26 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 78 (64) | 88 (52) | 81 (68) |
| | National | 82 (80) | 86 (84) | 87 (85) |

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 | 1999 | 21 | 15 | 36 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 6 | 10 | 13 |
| | Girls | 10 | 8 | 12 |
| | Total | 16 | 18 | 25 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 44 (39) | 50 (43) | 69 (52) |
| | National | 70 (63) | 69 (62) | 78 (69) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 11 | 13 | 13 |
| | Girls | 11 | 11 | 12 |
| | Total | 22 | 24 | 25 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 61 (43) | 67 (61) | 69 (44) |
| | National | 68 (63) | 69 (62) | 75 (69) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 10 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 8 |
| Pakistani | 6 |
| Bangladeshi | 10 |
| Chinese | 1 |
| White | 126 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 2 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 | 0 |
| Indian | 0 | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 |
| White | 5 | 0 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0 | 0 |

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

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

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 8 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 24 |
| Average class size | 27 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 9 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 115 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|------------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 47PT 24FTE |

| | |
|---|------|
| Total number of education support staff | 1 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 17.5 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|------|
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 23.5 |
|--------------------------------|------|

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|--|--------|
| Financial year | 1999 |
| | £ |
| Total income | 405103 |
| Total expenditure | 399265 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1699 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 15000 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 20838 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 240 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 102 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 65 | 29 | 5 | 0 | 1 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 52 | 41 | 4 | 3 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 51 | 37 | 8 | 3 | 1 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 35 | 41 | 11 | 7 | 6 |
| The teaching is good. | 60 | 32 | 5 | 1 | 2 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 50 | 28 | 18 | 3 | 1 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 74 | 23 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 62 | 30 | 7 | 0 | 1 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 49 | 41 | 8 | 0 | 2 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 59 | 35 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 60 | 31 | 8 | 0 | 1 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 43 | 27 | 23 | 2 | 6 |

Other issues raised by parents

Whilst several matters of concern to individual parents were raised at the meeting held for parents before the inspection, there were no further issues of general concern. Inspectors' responses to the concerns raised above are in the opening summary of the report under 'Parents' and Carers' Views'.

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

68. Children are admitted to the nursery on a part time basis soon after they become three years of age. Most children transfer to the reception class at the beginning of the year in which they become five years old. At the time of the inspection the majority of children under five were accommodated in the nursery. Evidence from the baseline assessments carried out soon after children enter the nursery, together with inspection evidence, shows attainment on entry to be very low in all areas of learning. Many children have language and literacy skills that are particularly poorly developed. The results of baseline assessment over recent years show that attainment on entry is deteriorating year on year. Overall, children make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning, although in personal, social and physical development, progress is good. However, because of their exceptionally low levels of attainment on entry, by the time they reach statutory school age their standards are still well below those of typical five year olds in all areas except personal, social and physical development, where it is below. Nevertheless, good teaching in the reception class enables these children to make good gains in their learning in all lessons. The headteacher has worked hard to build good relationships among staff, who feel valued. The broad findings of this inspection are similar to those of the previous inspection of November 1997.
69. Children have good opportunities to develop their personal and social skills through the varied opportunities to work and play together in small and family groups. Even so, a significant number of children in the nursery tend to play alongside rather than with their peers and communication through speech is very limited due to their extremely poor command of language. The quality of teaching is good in this area of learning. This enables these young children to develop a feeling of security and trust, so that they are ready to move forward with their learning. Children are secure in nursery routines and come into school cheerfully because they know they are respected and valued. On arrival each day children know which group they belong to and concentrate on tasks until they are complete. They select their own names during registration and happily assist the teacher by sweeping up the sand and by tidying away equipment. This contributes positively to the development of independence skills. They fetch their own coats and bring them to an adult if they need help to put them on. Children are usually well behaved, even when not under the close supervision of an adult, because teachers have high expectations of behaviour in lessons. They learn to share and take turns sensibly, as was evident when they played 'The farmer's in his den', and during a drama lesson where children decided who would be 'Godparents' at a 'pretend' christening.
70. Standards attained in language and literacy are well below those expected of an average five-year-old. A significant number of children do not have a sufficient command or understanding of language to respond appropriately to questions. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory. Appropriate emphasis is placed on developing reading skills, but not all children are supported by parents in sharing the books, which the children take home regularly. In the nursery, opportunities are provided for children to develop their speaking and listening skills through role-play

in their home corner. Although adults sometimes join in, play is unchallenging and there is little focus to the activities. Consequently, opportunities to develop children's oracy and writing skills are missed. The nursery teacher provides appropriate opportunities during class and family group sessions for children to talk about their everyday experiences at home or at school. In one lesson observed, the nursery nurse used telephones effectively to encourage children to participate in a two-way conversation. Nevertheless, the nursery does not provide a word-rich environment through the use of captions, labels and prompts. Expectations are higher in the reception class. For example, following a very effective introduction to a lesson on rhyming words, children identified examples such as 'jam' and 'ham' because the teacher continuously challenged them to try harder. Questions and explanations are used very effectively, as was evident when the teacher introduced and consolidated words such as title, author, and illustrator, in extending children's knowledge of books. Because writing skills are taught well, children begin to form letters correctly and control is developing. They listen attentively to stories and poetry because teachers are expressive readers. Good opportunities are provided for children to ask and answer questions. This was especially evident during a 'pretend' christening ceremony when children identified other uses of water, such as washing, drinking and swimming. Effective use is made of computer programs to enrich learning further. This was particularly evident when children with special educational needs used the computer to reinforce their knowledge of letter sounds.

71. Attainment in mathematics is well below average by the age of five. Children in the nursery count to ten and beyond when counting the number of children present during registration, but do not yet associate objects with their corresponding number. Few understand the concept of 'full' or 'empty' when filling containers of water and many children confuse the shape of an object with its colour. A minority understands that some dolls in the home corner are big and that some are small. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, learning intentions in nursery lessons are too broad and do not focus sufficiently in developing mathematical skills systematically. Because the teacher in the reception class plans carefully to meet specific needs, children make rapid gains in their learning. For example, during a very good lesson on number recognition, children were making good gains in learning to count and write numbers to 10 and to recognize their value, because tasks were exciting and the teacher made learning fun. They sort objects by colour, shape and size successfully. Although their knowledge of precise mathematical vocabulary is increasing because the teacher works very hard to introduce and consolidate learning, children struggle to express themselves in a way that can be understood.
72. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is well below that expected at five years of age. Few children in the nursery can talk about their families or the surrounding environment in which they live and do not understand the meaning of words such as 'roll', 'squash' or 'flatten' when using the playdough to make shapes. They learn to take care of the fish in the fish tank and are beginning to understand the need to take care of living things through their visits to the school nature area. To reinforce the concept of keeping clean, the teacher developed children's learning further by using pictures of objects such as a toothbrush and soap, although children's knowledge of associated words was extremely limited. Children are encouraged to

look at changes in the weather, and attempt to recite the days of the week, following the teacher's good example. The nursery nurse worked hard to encourage children to name and describe fruit in the 'feely' bag. Although teaching and progress is satisfactory overall, opportunities are sometimes missed in the nursery to develop children's natural curiosity in the world around them. Good teaching in the reception class enables children to make faster gains in their learning. During a 'pretend' christening, children learnt about Christian and other customs because the teacher dealt with the issue sensitively and respectfully. Drama was used effectively to reinforce this learning. Children identify and draw sources of light such as the sun and moon, and sort material such as plastic, metal and wood according to their properties. Their command of language is increasing rapidly because it is systematically introduced and reinforced.

73. Children's creative development is well below that expected of a typical five-year-old. Although children in the nursery select their own paint, their control of equipment such as paintbrushes and scissors is poor. Teachers make good use of singing to increase children's speaking and listening skills. For example, nursery children are beginning to build up a repertoire of nursery rhymes and they respond to the rhythm in songs by clapping and moving in time to the music. Although teaching is satisfactory, opportunities are lost for children to develop independence in selecting the size and shape of their paper or paintbrush or by mixing their own colours. Children in the reception class listen carefully to music on the tape recorder and decide whether it is fast or slow. They change the style of their singing and playing accordingly. They are becoming increasingly confident in their performance because the teaching of new songs is effective. For example the teacher kept stopping the tape to ensure children knew the words and rhythm of the new song they were learning. They demonstrate knowledge of primary as well as some secondary colours when creating pictures in the style of Matisse, and include details such as fingers and hair in drawings of themselves.
74. Children develop their physical skills in a variety of ways and make good progress, although attainment is still below that expected at five years old. Many children live in apartment blocks where there is little scope for physical outdoor exercise. Although good opportunities are regularly provided for children in the nursery to practise skills such as throwing and catching balls of different sizes, their lack of stamina is a matter of real concern. For example children can often be seen sitting down to rest after a relatively short period of physical activity. Children pedal and steer bicycles and scooters with increasing control but the outdoor play area lacks stimulation or real interest and children do not have access to larger equipment on which to climb and balance. The quality of teaching of physical education skills is satisfactory. Children in the reception class listen carefully and follow instructions, demonstrating an increasing awareness of the best use of space. Their skills in controlling scissors and pencils are increasing through the well-chosen opportunities to practise.
75. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is mainly satisfactory in the nursery and occasionally good. The teacher and nursery nurses work well together as a team and have an appropriate understanding of the needs of young children. Activities are planned to ensure that all children have equal access to the curriculum. Although all

staff have been involved in planning a rolling two year programme for the under fives, day-to-day planning in the nursery lacks clarity of focus and most children experience the same activities, regardless of need. Learning intentions are too general and the nursery environment lacks real challenge and stimulation. Teaching in the reception class is consistently good and occasionally very good. Good and very good teaching is characterised by very clear planning which includes exciting, challenging tasks that focus on the specific needs of individual children, continuous reinforcement of learning by good questions and explanations, and a good brisk pace and urgency to learning. A strength of the teaching of the under fives is the way in which teachers establish a rapport with these young children from the start, making them feel secure and ready to learn, and high expectations of good manners and behaviour encourage children to respond to lessons well.

76. Good relationships are being established with parents through the use of home visits, and through the mother and toddler group, which meets regularly on the school premises. These are positive initiatives. Baseline assessment is further developed as children move from class to class and results at the end of the reception year indicate that children sometimes make better progress in some areas of the curriculum than children in similar schools. Examples of children's work are kept and termly targets are set. The school is currently modifying the curriculum for the under fives in the light of recent developments nationally. It is now ready to move forward and recognises the need for further training and more rigorous monitoring to ensure that teaching and learning is consistently good.

ENGLISH

77. In the 1999 national tests for eleven year olds, standards were well below schools nationally and similar schools. Results over the last three years show a sharp drop in standards in 1998 and 1999. This is because both those years had a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs. Although pupils are expected to achieve standards in line with national averages in this year's national tests, this very much depends on their performance on the day and on the nature of the task demanded of them. However, scrutiny of work and discussions with staff and pupils, indicate that standards are below those expected of typical eleven-year-olds in all aspects of English. Even so, this represents a significant improvement on the previous two years' results. The school has worked hard to raise levels of attainment and has set clear, achievable targets, which are now being met. This, together with good teaching, is enabling pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, to make good progress in reading, speaking and listening. Initiatives to improve handwriting, punctuation and presentation have brought about a marked improvement since the last inspection. The school has not yet made sufficient provision for pupils to develop the content and extent of their writing across other areas of the curriculum and, although progress for all pupils is satisfactory, they do not always achieve as well as they should in this area of learning. The majority of pupils in Year 6 have attended booster classes on Saturday mornings. This has had a significant impact on raising standards.

78. Pupils enter Year 1 with very low levels of attainment in reading and writing. Speaking and listening skills are particularly low. At the end of Key Stage 1, results in the 1999 national tests showed attainment in reading to be very low when compared to schools nationally, and in line when compared to similar schools. In writing, pupils achieved levels, which were below those nationally, but above average when compared to pupils in similar schools. In this year's national tests, pupils are likely to achieve standards in reading and writing that are below those nationally. A significant number of pupils will only just achieve the required level and a small minority is likely to achieve standards above those nationally. Again, this represents an improvement on last year's results, although too much reliance should not be placed on results this year, as the cohort of pupils taking the tests is very small. Nevertheless, inspection evidence indicates that standards are rising throughout the school.
79. Pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills throughout both key stages, because teachers provide frequent, well-planned opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to practise. These take place not only in whole class but also in small group sessions. Subject specific vocabulary is systematically introduced and reinforced and pupils gain confidence because teachers use praise and encouragement effectively. For example, following very good questioning by the teacher, Year 1 pupils used simple, short sentences to explain how to test whether seeds needed water, heat and light to grow into healthy plants. In developing their understanding of how to pose appropriate questions, older pupils in the key stage begin to ask their own, starting with 'How, why, and what', although their questions are often very short, and speech is sometimes unclear. Following a good introduction and clear instructions, younger pupils in Key Stage 2 discussed the layout and content of a poem which played with words, and expressed their views and opinions using more complex, but often ungrammatical, sentences. Older pupils are beginning to recognize the need for precise vocabulary. A very good example was seen during a Year 6 lesson when pupils used words such as font, page layout and text when describing how to design a CD ROM page for their science work. Nevertheless, pupils struggle to find appropriate vocabulary, for example, to describe the contents of the books they are reading, and they do not always retain key vocabulary, in spite of teachers working very hard to increase pupils' knowledge of words.
80. Although attainment in reading is below average by the end of both key stages, pupils make good progress because teachers use lessons well to reinforce and increase pupils' range of reading matter. Pupils have frequent opportunities to read both fiction and non-fiction in, for example, the big book class sessions during the literacy hour, and teachers carefully assess the performance of individual pupils in guided reading sessions. The school encourages parents to support children's reading at home, but this is not always successful, and the setting of small achievable targets in home/school reading booklets is not always consistently applied. Nevertheless, the school's initiatives to increase the choice and range of reading material, to suit the particular interests of boys as well as girls, are beginning to pay dividends. Pupils enjoy reading a wide range of reading matter, which includes dictionaries, thesauruses and encyclopaedias.

81. As a result of good teaching in Year 1, pupils decide on the content of books by looking carefully at the title and picture and identifying a few familiar words in the text, sometimes using the sound of the letter at the beginning of words to help them. Older pupils in the key stage read simple text with reasonable accuracy and use this knowledge to find answers to well-posed questions. Higher attaining pupils read simple non-fiction books accurately and compose their own questions to show they understand what they have read. Nevertheless, pupils find difficulty in expressing their views when describing events and characters in their reading, despite good demonstrations by teachers. After accurately reading a passage containing onomatopoeic words, younger pupils in Key Stage 2 successfully gave their own examples, such as 'sizzling' and 'splash'. In developing their comprehension skills, pupils in Year 5 accurately read a selection of letters and then identified phrases that best described the writers' feelings. Pupils in Year 6 read pages taken from the Internet and successfully modified these to suit younger readers. Although teachers plan interesting tasks to extend learning, pupils' comprehension of significant themes and their use of inference and deduction are below expectation for this age.
82. The library is spacious and used regularly by pupils to reinforce reading and research skills. Useful prompt cards help pupils to find relevant books and other reference sources. However, other prompts, such as colour coded subject lists, are in a poor state of repair and are much too high for younger pupils to use. Some books need replacing and, although there are attractive displays of pupils' work, these do not include book reviews or posters that encourage pupils' reading.
83. There is some variation in the quality of writing both between and within classes. This is due to the fact that pupils in Years 1 and 2 have had more than one teacher. Although scrutiny of work over the year indicates that progress overall is satisfactory, this is now much better as a result of the good and sometimes very good teaching taking place. In this context, pupils in Year 1 are becoming much more confident in their attempts at independent writing, and are beginning to incorporate known words and attempt others, because phonic skills are well taught. Teachers surround pupils with prompts such as word banks and captions containing familiar and new vocabulary; these are continuously reinforced through questions and explanations. Older pupils in Key Stage 1 write correctly sequenced sentences but only the higher attainers are beginning to incorporate apt and interesting vocabulary to enrich their writing, despite good encouragement from the teacher. Spelling is below expectations but pupils do include full stops and capital letters in much of their work.
84. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress, although this accelerates in Years 3 and 6 because teachers' expectations are higher. Good opportunities for pupils to write creatively in Year 3 enabled them to produce imaginative and amusing versions of traditional stories and nursery rhymes, both in the present and past tense. Pupils in Year 4 write persuasively on environmental issues, such as that of keeping birds in captivity, at the same time incorporating views from different perspectives. In developing their understanding of text written in dialect, pupils in Year 5 decode examples and then attempt to write these in correct grammatical style. Nevertheless, for most pupils in Years 4 and 5, work over time lacks sufficient detail and there is insufficient attention to pupils extending or completing unfinished work. By the age of

eleven, pupils incorporate more interesting sentence structure and vocabulary into their written work and use phrases such as ‘sparkling like crystal’ in enriching their character descriptions, although they find difficulty in writing grammatically. Their handwriting is neat and joined. In spite of good attention being paid to the teaching of spelling, pupils are still below expectations in this area.

85. Pupils with special educational needs and those receiving the additional literacy support make good progress, because the adults who work with them are well prepared and work is well planned to suit their specific needs. Although pupils find concentration difficult, they work with interest, because tasks are varied and lessons move at a good pace.
86. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. It is consistently good and occasionally very good in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 6, where lessons are characterised by lively introductions, high expectations and lessons move at a brisk pace and with infectious enthusiasm. Consequently, pupils show interest in their work and sustain their concentration. Most teachers display good subject knowledge and they know pupils well. This enables them to plan work that is carefully matched to pupils’ needs, helping them to maximise their learning. Good links are made to other subjects to enable pupils to develop reading and speaking and listening skills across the curriculum. However, pupils’ written work in other subjects is not always planned to support work in English, and the demands placed on them do not match their capabilities. Although in lessons seen in Years 4 and 5 teaching was at least satisfactory and occasionally good, scrutiny of work over the year suggests that this is not always the norm. For example, some work is unfinished and insufficient in quantity, and marking does not give pupils a clear idea of how to improve. In other classes pupils receive comments that are informative and helpful. The care and concern which all teachers display towards their pupils is a strength of the school. In nearly all lessons, pupils’ attitudes to English are good. They are quickly learning how to sustain their concentration and are often engrossed in their work. Teachers value pupils’ contributions and the plenary sessions at the end of lessons are used very well to allow pupils to share their good work with the rest of the class. Teachers work very hard to build good relationships and the success of this is clearly evident by the way in which pupils settle quickly and quietly to tasks. Their very good behaviour enables all to get on with their work without disruption.
87. The quality of leadership is good. The literacy hour is becoming firmly established, although the school recognises the need to modify the time used for independent, creative writing to include other areas of the curriculum. Teachers’ planning is regularly monitored and good advice is given. The headteacher and co-ordinator have been successful in building confidence and self esteem among staff, although observations to determine the quality of teaching and learning in lessons need to be more rigorous to ensure that all teachers know clearly how to improve. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, although attention is still needed to improve the quality of pupils’ writing. The impact of English on pupils’ spiritual and cultural development is good and is very good on their moral and social development. Pupils experience awe and wonder during expressive story and poetry

lessons, and there are frequent opportunities for pupils to share ideas in both class and group sessions.

MATHEMATICS

88. Attainment in lessons is below national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2. Considering their very low starting point when they enter the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. There has been continuing improvement since the last inspection, even though standards are variable year on year, because there is a difference between different cohorts of pupils. This has meant, for instance, that attainments at the end of Key Stage 2 have been below expectations for the last two years but were much better the year before that. The school accurately measures individual pupils' potential and carefully targets learning to ensure that each pupil achieves as well as they can.
89. In the 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds, pupils' average point score was below the national average, but in line with similar schools. The proportion attaining the expected Level 2 and the higher Level 3 was substantially higher than the previous year. In the 1999 national tests for 11-year-olds, pupils' average points score was well below the national average and below similar schools. This happened because there was a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in last year's Year 6. Teachers recognized this, and worked hard to improve pupils' scores. For instance, they provided additional lessons for pupils at the end of the school day. This year, most pupils enjoy having extra lessons on Saturday mornings and this is having a very good impact on their progress.
90. Standards of work seen in lessons with seven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 1 are below national expectations. However, their progress since starting school has been good because they started school with very few skills at all. Pupils in Year 2 know the difference between a whole, half and quarter turn. In the playground, for instance, they stood in the middle of the large clock painted on the playground and accurately turned half way round the clock, with higher attaining pupils accurately working out where a quarter turn would leave them. The higher attaining pupils could do this starting at any number. This was great fun and helped them to remember simple fractions as well as helping them to tell the time. In another 'real life' number problem, nearly all pupils knew that there would be three people left from a bus queue containing six, if three got on the first bus. In this way, they successfully worked out simple subtraction sums. However, pupils' mental agility is not as quick as it should be. The top half of the Year 2 class meet the expected standards, but the lower half do not. In most schools, nine out of ten pupils would meet the expected standards. In work seen in Year 6, pupils use the four rules of number to solve money problems, give the right change and respond quickly to the mental sums set regularly by the teacher. The use of mental mathematics has particularly improved since the last inspection. In one lesson, pupils calculated addition and subtraction of decimals to two places. Higher attainers immediately worked out that 1.00 take away 0.21 equals 0.79. Middle and lower attaining pupils needed a bit longer and some had to write the sum down. Overall, however, this class is poised to match the national average in the national tests and

could well achieve above the national average if all goes well on the day. One thing that holds pupils back is their lack of self-confidence. They do not always apply their mathematics knowledge well to new situations and are too dependent on teachers to help them.

91. Whilst teachers consolidate mathematics skills in other subjects, the level of demand does not always reflect pupils' capabilities. In science and design technology, for instance, pupils accurately measure and weigh when doing practical work, and in Key Stage 2 geography, they regularly use graphs. However, pupils often work at a level that does not stretch them mathematically. Better use of mathematics across the curriculum would help them to develop more confidence.
92. There is little difference between the progress of boys and girls over the last 4 years, although the school rightly recognises that there is a tendency for boys nationally to under-perform in comparison to girls and so tries hard to interest boys in lessons. There is also good recognition of the separate needs of higher and lower attainers, who are provided with different tasks for their different needs. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when lower and higher attainers did not have work that was suitably challenging.
93. The quality of teaching is good overall, with teaching in key Stage 1 often very good. It is to the credit of teachers that no lessons observed were graded less than good. Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy materials well as a result of good training they had before it was implemented. This means that teachers feel confident about teaching mathematics and pupils know clearly what is expected of them. Teachers' confidence also helps them to adjust their teaching for all the pupils from the most to the least able, helping pupils to maximise their achievements. In Year 6, for instance, pupils in the lowest attaining group were asked the problem "what do you add to 0.3 to make a whole one", whereas pupils in the top group had to work out $0.79 - 0.21$, which was a much harder sum. Teachers' planning is very detailed and takes full account of all the parts of the National Curriculum and National Numeracy Strategy. As a result, pupils develop ideas and understanding across the full range of expectations. Teachers manage pupils in a firm but fair way, expecting respect from pupils and politeness to each other. As a result, there is good discipline that leads to well ordered lessons in which pupils apply themselves to their work and enjoy their learning. The fact that so many Year 6 pupils turn up for extra lessons on Saturday mornings is an admirable testimony to how teachers captivate pupils' interest and motivation. Teachers assess pupils' work well, telling them how to improve and setting future targets. As a result, pupils know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve further. The regular and effective use of homework helps pupils to learn for themselves.
94. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator regularly visits other teachers' classes to make sure that teaching and learning are effective. There is clear agreement over what is taught so that pupils do not repeat work unnecessarily, and there is a good mix of newer learning materials with older tried and tested methods. There are sufficient resources and the large classrooms containing good display provide good conditions for pupils, teachers and assistants to work in. The school has

concentrated on mathematics during the implementation of the National Numeracy Project and has benefited from this focus.

SCIENCE

95. The percentage of pupils who reach the nationally expected standard by the age of seven is below average, but standards are beginning to improve. This is mainly because the teacher appointed to the Year 2 class in January is successfully improving the way pupils learn. She gives pupils many practical activities to help them investigate scientific problems for themselves. The most recent work pupils have done is, therefore, at the level expected of pupils aged seven. However, they have not had the benefit of this good teaching for long enough to attain the expected standards in all aspects of science. The Year 1 teacher, who has recently returned from secondment to a Local Education Authority support initiative, is also contributing to the general raising of standards in Key Stage 1. In the 1999 national tests, the number of pupils achieving the expected standard was well below the national average for all schools but about average when compared to similar schools.
96. By the age of eleven, most pupils attain close to the nationally expected standard. They write and talk confidently about the human body. For example, they know about the major organs of the body and what their functions are. They accurately describe the human respiratory system and how the heart works to pump blood around the body. Pupils have a clear grasp of what makes a healthy diet and they know that some lifestyle choices such as smoking, drug misuse, alcohol misuse and too much processed, convenience foods can injure people's health. They know how to place accident victims in the correct recovery position and what the best procedures are for resuscitating someone who has stopped breathing. The pupils have a satisfactory understanding of physical processes. For example, they know how gravity acts on matter and that there are other forces, such as upthrust, that work against gravity. They use this knowledge to explain why it takes a force of fewer Newtons to pick up an object in water than it does out of it. In the 1999 national tests, the pupils attained standards well below those expected nationally of pupils aged eleven. Their results were close to those of similar schools. The standard of work seen is higher than that indicated by the test results because the current Year 6 contain fewer pupils with special educational needs.
97. The standards pupils attain have improved since the last inspection. This is particularly so at Key Stage 2. Inspection evidence indicates that there are three main reasons for this; more teaching time is devoted to science than in most other schools, teachers are better now at providing appropriate practical activities to help pupils' investigation skills, and the school makes good use of specialist teachers from a local high school to provide challenging work for pupils and advice to teachers.
98. The overall quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Of the lessons seen, fifty-seven per cent were good or better. Teachers know the subject well and plan their lessons thoroughly. Lesson plans clearly explain the methods the teachers use and what the pupils are expected to know and do. Lessons provide good opportunities for the pupils to acquire the skills and knowledge they need. For example, in a Year 3

lesson, pupils used a simple circuit with a bulb to test different materials to see if they would conduct electricity. This helped pupils to work out for themselves which materials made good conductors and which did not. Most teachers set interesting and challenging work and organise pupils well. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils were required to devise a way of testing how shadows are made, and to use what they had learned to explain why the shadow of a stick in the playground moved its position during the course of the day. The pupils worked hard at their investigations, they listened carefully to the teacher and to each other. They worked at a good pace so that by the end of the lesson they could give good explanations for what they had observed. Most pupils show a strong interest in their work. Good attitudes are established early in the reception class, where the teacher skilfully provides a good range of interesting activities that helps to capture pupils' imagination. In a lesson on forces, for example, pupils enjoyed working at interesting activities during their investigation into wind power. Most teachers make good use of resources. In Year 6, for example, the teacher uses the expertise of subject specialists from the local high school and from the Heartstart Project. Pupils are taken to the high school to use the science laboratories for a good range of experiments and investigations. They use trainers from the Heartstart Project to give pupils practical experience with resuscitation dummies so that they develop the skills they need to put their knowledge of the human body into practice. Only one lesson was judged to be unsatisfactory. This was because the teaching did not adequately prepare the pupils for the task they were expected to do. The pupils, therefore became frustrated, lost interest and did not achieve what was asked of them.

99. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator successfully supports her colleagues through providing pupils with greater opportunities for investigative learning. The school has made good use of its links with the local high school and the Heartstart project. These initiatives have helped staff to improve their own subject knowledge and to provide pupils with opportunities to do work at a higher level. These measures have helped the school to raise significantly the standards the pupils attain by the time they are eleven. There was no separate report on science in the previous inspection and it is not therefore possible to comment on improvements since then.

ART

100. Attainment is below national expectation at the end of Key Stage 1 and in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. However, pupils' progress is satisfactory throughout the school, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Attainment is below the national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 because pupils do not always work neatly. However, teachers are aware of this and help pupils to improve. The rate of improvement increases as pupils move up the school and by the time they leave, most pupils produce work that matches national expectations of 11-year-olds.
101. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have produced pictures that are influenced by the abstract painter, Mondrian. In a lesson seen, they appreciated the way that the artist used squares and rectangular blocks of colour, and successfully used paint and crayon to produce their own designs using this approach. Particularly effective designs were

created by pupils using a computer to generate the blocks of colour. Whilst some pupils' work lacked neatness or precision, they enjoyed the lesson, which helped them to appreciate the work of a major modern painter. In other classes, pupils complete colourful wall murals and use a variety of materials to create colourful and interesting designs. In the reception class, for instance, pupils enjoyed using tissue paper and glue to make colourful collages in the style of the French artist, Matisse. They even learnt a few phrases of French to accompany their French-style designs, greeting the visitor with "Bonjour" and "Merci beaucoup" and with lots of enjoyable laughter!! The session was fun and pupils learnt a lot. However, pupils sometimes fail to take sufficient care over what they do. They often want to finish the work quickly because they feel this will make them look clever. Consequently, a sizeable minority do not take sufficient care and time over what they are doing. Pupils discuss what they are doing and therefore learn to explain themselves using descriptive vocabulary.

102. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 6 have completed interesting artwork in a range of media and styles. In one lesson, they were engaged in seven different activities; one group was enlarging a drawing by using a squared grid whilst another sewed names onto fabric using Egyptian hieroglyphs. Two other groups were completing a class tapestry and handpainting onto paperboard that they had made themselves. Finally, the last three groups were preparing a storyboard about "The Labours of Heracles", using a sewing machine to design an appliqué and using a computer to design animated clips using a complex graphics program called 'Powerpoint'. Despite this bewildering range of activities, all pupils were very purposefully involved in what they were doing and making good progress. They spoke intelligently about the processes, using correct art vocabulary. In the process, very effective links were made to other subjects, including design technology, history and information technology. In other classes, pupils have completed vibrant paintings based on Aztec artwork, created interesting string prints and produced sensitive pastel drawings based on the work of the artist Georgia O'Keefe. Whilst the work on this artist was good, pupils sometimes have difficulty retaining knowledge about famous artists and do not always apply the principles successfully in their own work. The limited opportunities for reflective and descriptive discussion or writing about art prevents the subject being used successfully to further pupils' literacy skills.
103. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have clear planning and convey the principles of art enthusiastically so pupils are clear about what they are doing. As mentioned, despite making effective links between pupils' own work and that of other artists, pupils do not consolidate this knowledge, and so their learning remains simplistic and somewhat predictable. Teachers manage pupils well, and this ensures that pupils apply themselves creatively in lessons, working at a good pace and with their minds on what they are doing. Teachers regularly stop lessons to explain how pupils might improve their work. This helps them to learn better by making them think about what they are doing. Teachers' sensitive approaches help those who lack self-confidence. A number of pupils regularly need reassurance from the teacher or helpers and this sometimes prevents them thinking and learning for themselves. Nevertheless, most pupils are enthusiastic learners and want to do well.

104. The management of the subject is satisfactory. However, the co-ordinator has only taken over responsibility for the subject very recently and is aware that schemes do not contain enough emphasis on three-dimensional work. There is some attempt to assess pupils' efforts by individual staff, but the portfolios are not used enough to grade pieces of work against agreed criteria. There is effective planning for future developments and the co-ordinator plans to provide support for colleagues by monitoring standards and providing in-class help if required. There are sufficient resources for art, and the available space in classrooms is well used. The display of artwork around the school and in rooms shows appreciation of pupils' efforts and helps them to feel more positive about their own talents.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105. Pupils' attainment in design and technology is above national expectation at the end of both key stages. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in most classes in individual lessons and over time. Improved levels of challenge for higher attaining pupils have followed criticisms in the last inspection. This has been achieved by training for teachers in how to stretch higher attainers, good monitoring by the co-ordinator and effective use of target setting to ensure that individual pupils reach their potential. There is no difference between the work of boys and girls or between those from different ethnic groups.
106. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils design, make and evaluate products well. Pupils in Year 2 are making realistic models of playground equipment having evaluated full size items by asking questions such as "Does it work?", "Is it safe?", "Does it look attractive?" and "Are the materials suitable?". In the process pupils consider a range of factors that decide whether items are fit for their purpose. This also helps them to realise that common sense and discretion is needed to get value for money. Regular opportunities for pupils to work together help them to develop good teamwork skills. Pupils investigate different ways of making and joining things. In a reception lesson, for instance, pupils were making attractive tissue cases as a Fathers' Day present. Some pupils glued pieces of fabric together, whilst others used staples or sewing. They discussed which method of joining the materials was the strongest and which was the quickest. They quickly realised that the quickest way is not necessarily the strongest. Pupils' mathematics skills are regularly reinforced as they learn to measure accurately. Their literacy skills are also helped as they discuss important aspects of the design. In the process they become more discriminating in their use of language.
107. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils in year 6 are successfully designing items of home furniture, bearing factors such as style, cost and the intended market, in mind. During this exciting project, pupils visit a major local retailer to see furniture disassembled and have visits from employees from the firm, who provide expert advice about consumer choice and product design. This is an excellent project that encourages an enterprising response from pupils. As a result, several pupils have decided they would like to be furniture designers when they grow up. In this class, the cycle of planning, making and evaluating is well established and this helps the pupils to understand the importance of standing back from the purely practical aspects of the subjects in order to think logically about the whole process. However, this does not happen consistently

well in all classes. In one class, for instance, pupils were making a design to go on a T shirt with no thought about the market impact of the product or who its target consumers would be. Much depends on the ingenuity and imagination of the teacher's planning. Literacy and numeracy development is not always sufficiently well integrated and so opportunities are lost in Key Stage 2 to promote skills in writing and number.

108. The quality of teaching is good overall, although there is a marked variation between the best and worst teaching. Whilst most teachers help pupils to appreciate the need to design products for a specific purpose, some teachers do not do this imaginatively enough. There is sometimes a thin boundary between designing things that just look nice and designing products that have a particular market or purpose in mind. Overall, the quality of teachers' planning is good and this creates a positive response from pupils who become enthusiastic about learning. Teachers' emphasis on both the design and making elements helps pupils to apply intellectual as well as creative effort as they learn. For instance, a Year 5 class did not start to make jewellery until they had completed thoughtful designs or considered who the jewellery was for. The class knew that teenagers would want a different kind of product to children or sophisticated older purchasers. All teachers manage behaviour well, creating a settled learning atmosphere in which pupils can get on without being disturbed. The good relationships between teachers and pupils create an atmosphere of trust in which pupils can think and learn for themselves. However, some pupils still expect too much help from teachers and are frightened to try things out for themselves. Teachers give good feedback to pupils about the quality of their work and what they need to do to make it better. Pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes to work have a beneficial impact on their learning. They use the tools and materials safely and sensibly.
109. The management of the subject is good. There is very clear planning of lessons and the co-ordinator successfully monitors what happens in classes to identify aspects that could be improved. If teachers need help, the co-ordinator has release time to go into their classes to work alongside them. This is good practice and helps teachers to feel well supported and valued. There are sufficient resources and the large classrooms ensure that pupils have enough space for practical sessions.

GEOGRAPHY

110. Too few lessons were seen in geography to make firm judgements about pupils' standards of work. Also, much of the written work was not available for scrutiny because pupils had taken it home. Inspectors interviewed a small group of Year 6 pupils about the work they do. These pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of some aspects of geography. For example, they talk sensibly about how rain is formed. They know that water causes erosion and that rivers sometimes alter course, often leaving small lakes, but they could not recall the terms 'tributary', 'erosion' or 'oxbow lake.' to describe what they knew or other technical terms used in the subject. Overall, however, there is insufficient evidence to allow a judgement about attainment to be made. Consequently, it is not possible to gauge the amount of improvement since the last inspection, when attainment was below national expectations.

111. Not enough lessons were timetabled to reach a firm conclusion about the quality of teaching. Four of the seven classrooms have small displays to help the pupils remember some of the things they had learned. In Year 1, for example, a useful display shows how pupils have carried out a study of local types of houses. This shows that the teacher helps pupils to learn the appropriate terms for describing houses and the materials used to build them. In other classrooms, displays about volcanoes, the local environment and how pupils see Wednesbury's future development indicate the range of geographical investigation undertaken. However, displays do not show clearly whether pupils are sufficiently challenged to ask questions or whether they undertake searching individual research.
112. Pupils who were interviewed, nevertheless, indicated that they enjoyed geography. Although the management of the subject is satisfactory overall, it has some weaknesses. The school does not sufficiently monitor pupils' understanding or knowledge. There is a lack of clear vision about how teaching and the curriculum could be improved. However, the subject manager has worked with a group of geographers to prepare an interesting scheme of work based on thermal images of Sandwell. This innovative project, which uses computer software to provide pupils with opportunities to study environmental issues, will be used in the near future to stimulate pupils' learning.

HISTORY

113. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 do not reach the standards expected of pupils aged seven. This is because pupils' basic language skills are low. Most pupils, however, understand that things change with time. For example, they know that trains today are not the same as Victorian steam trains, and that those were very different from the earliest steam locomotives such as Stephenson's Rocket. Pupils have some understanding of the work of famous people in the periods they study. They know, for example, about the work of Louis Braille, who invented a reading system for blind people. Pupils at Key Stage 2 attain the expected standards in most aspects of the subject. They have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the periods they study. For example, they talk with confidence about their work on Victorian Britain. They successfully place the periods they study in chronological order. Most pupils make satisfactory use of historical terms. Most pupils enjoy looking at objects from the past, as well as pictures, and photographs, although their conclusions are not always sufficiently perceptive when using such a range of evidence or written about in sufficient detail. This sometimes results from a lack of emphasis being placed on pupils' writing skills.
114. The standards of work seen are better now than they were at the time of the previous inspection, particularly at Key Stage 2. This is mainly because the school has improved the quality of its teaching aids, such as its collection of replica objects, for pupils to examine. At Key Stage 1, standards are also improving, due to the good teaching of a teacher appointed in January, and to the return of a good teacher who was recently on leave to work elsewhere in the Local Education Authority.

115. The quality of teaching throughout the school is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Occasionally it is unsatisfactory. In the most effective lessons, teachers' planning clearly shows what they want pupils to know and do by the end of the lesson. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils successfully appreciated what it was like to live on rations during World War 2 because the teacher had carefully planned exciting practical activities. The pupils examined real ration books and used powdered milk, stock cubes and parsley to make *Two-Minute Soup*. Pupils showed a strong interest in their work, concentrated hard and behaved well. By the end of the lesson the pupils talked enthusiastically and confidently about what they had learned. In the best lessons, teachers' management and organisation of the pupils is good. This helps pupils to learn effectively because no time is wasted and they know what they should be doing. Another strength of the teaching is the way most teachers use replicas of objects from the past to help the pupils learn, for instance, about what life was like for ancient Egyptians, Greeks and Aztecs. Occasional unsatisfactory teaching has not been successfully prepared. In one Key Stage 2 lesson, for example, pupils were asked to identify and record similarities and differences between maps of an ancient Aztec city and modern-day Wednesbury. The task was too demanding because the pupils did not know enough about either place. They grew restless and achieved little.
116. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. Some recent action by the school has helped to raise standards. One of these is the wise investment in good replicas of objects used by people from past civilisations. Another is the school's increasing use of local senior citizens to provide first-hand accounts of what it was like to live during World War 2. The school is making good use of information technology to help pupils learn more about the past.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

117. Attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages. There has been an improvement in standards since the previous inspection, when standards were below national expectations. This is because the school has invested in new computers that run modern programs and has a range of software that is suitable for use across the subjects of the curriculum. It is also due to good planning for the subject and regular monitoring of what is being taught and learnt.
118. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils understand many of the jobs that computers are used for. They know that computers save information in the form of words, charts and pictures. They understand that many applications are interactive; that is, they respond in different ways to particular instructions. Pupils in Year 2, for instance, programmed the movements of a computerised turtle, making the paths more and more intricate as they grew in confidence. As a result of doing this, pupils understand that information technology controls machines to make things and do jobs that people find hard. Pupils use computer programs in many different lessons. In the reception, for instance, pupils used a program called "Naughty Stories" to improve their reading, and in Year 2 pupils used a painting application called "First Artist" to make colourful abstract pictures in the style of the abstract artist, Mondrian. Good links with other subjects include history programs that explore life in ancient Egypt and Greece. In mathematics, pupils use various applications to improve their grasp of number and

understanding of shapes. They print out their work so that it can be displayed or kept with their other work.

119. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use information technology with confidence. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils quickly grasped the principles of creating pages on the World Wide Web. Not only did they prepare text for publication, but also integrated art clips that moved to the sounds they had chosen. They use special software for handling data. This is of particular help in their understanding of mathematics, and for producing charts and diagrams in science. Pupils use a music programme that helps them to play the electronic keyboard and compose tunes. There are good examples of well-produced word processing, some of which skilfully integrates pictures and diagrams. This work successfully supports pupils' literacy development. The only area that is not wholly covered in lessons is the use of information technology to monitor external events such as lighting, sound or the weather. However, a new computer suite is to be completed by the end of term and lighting and sound equipment is waiting to be installed. Those with special educational needs are given full access to computers, and those who are higher attainers are encouraged to explore programs in greater depth, often on their home computers. Consequently, all pupils make good progress. There is no difference between the progress of boys and girls or pupils from different ethnic groups.
120. Insufficient teaching was seen during the inspection to form a secure judgement of its quality. However, in the two lessons seen, teachers were very confident. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher skilfully answered a range of complex questions, giving very informative demonstrations that used the full power of the available computer to best effect. Enthusiastic responses from pupils clearly indicated that they had learnt well. Pupils use computers from their earliest years, and this helps them to grow in confidence as they think and learn for themselves. Pupils seen using the computers sustain their concentration well, understand what they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Because most pupils use the equipment sensibly, teachers successfully integrate the use of computers into mainstream lessons so that a small group or pair of pupils use the computers whilst the rest of the class concentrates on other work. However, not all teachers make clear records of what pupils are doing. This limits the accuracy with which they target individual pupils' learning. However, this has been identified as an area for improvement, and helpful monitoring by the co-ordinator is improving this aspect of teaching.
121. The school has sufficient computers and will be well off when fifteen new machines are installed in the new computer suite later in the term. This exciting development, that should have a significant impact on learning, exemplifies the forward thinking and good management of the subject. The co-ordinator has a very clear grasp of how teachers use computers and provides helpful advice and support to colleagues. Schemes of work are suitably detailed, and there is good planning for future developments beyond the building of the suite. There has been good improvement since the last inspection; a full range of information technology skills is now offered to pupils, and there is better support for higher attainers.

MUSIC

122. By the end of both key stages pupils achieve standards that are in line with those expected at seven and eleven years of age. The very detailed scheme of work, compiled by the co-ordinator, complies with the National Curriculum, is teacher friendly and provides a clear sequence to learning. It includes termly targeted assessments, although neither these nor the scheme of work have been in place long enough to be fully effective in influencing planning for future learning or to significantly raise standards. Although progress is deemed to be satisfactory for all pupils across the school, this has accelerated considerably since the introduction of the new initiatives. The school has continued to maintain and develop standards since the last inspection and there is now potential for good improvement.
123. At Key Stage 1, pupils sing enthusiastically and sometimes tunefully, and often move and clap spontaneously in time to the music. Very good teaching in Year 1 enabled pupils to represent the sound and movement of contrasting creatures such as elephants and fish whilst listening to 'The Carnival of the Animals'. During a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils selected and played tuned and untuned percussion instruments to represent the different sounds and moods created by water. Very good questions led them to evaluate and modify their performance.
124. Specialist teaching in Years 3 and 4 is enabling pupils to play the recorder with confidence. They recognize basic musical notation and produce a pleasing quality of tone in their performance. As they move up the school they then learn to play the fife in developing their knowledge and experience of other instruments. This is having a considerable impact on raising pupils' self esteem. The school has provided all the pupils with their own instrument, which enables pupils to take them home for further practice. Pupils sing with enjoyment and their awareness of the need to modify their tone to suit the music is evident during hymn singing in assembly when pupils changed the style of their singing in quiet and louder passages of music. Good use is made of information technology as was demonstrated in a good lesson in Year 6 led by the co-ordinator, when pupils used keyboards linked to computers to perform a piece of music.
125. Pupils' attitudes to music are good. Pupils get great pleasure in demonstrating their talents to others as was clearly demonstrated in Year 4 when pupils quickly reorganised themselves in order to demonstrate what they had learned in a previous lesson to show the inspector. Pupils take turns and share instruments sensibly and take responsibility for setting out and putting away their own.
126. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages although examples of very good teaching were seen at Key Stage 1. The very able subject co-ordinator is being used effectively to provide specialist teaching at Key Stage 2. Very good teaching is characterised by very effective planning which includes imaginative, challenging tasks and clear learning intentions. Teachers' very effective use of humour was demonstrated in a lesson in Year 1 when the teacher used a very high and then a very low voice, which appealed to the pupils' own sense of humour, in helping them to understand the difference between high and low sounds in music. Despite good, and sometimes very good teaching, standards do not rise above national expectations

because the scheme of work and regular assessments have only been recently introduced.

127. The contribution that the subject makes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to listen to and comment upon music from cultures other than their own. Music is used very effectively to increase pupils' enjoyment and performance in dance lessons, for example, and music often sets the scene for worship in assemblies. Music is often played as pupils enter and leave school. This creates a cheerful atmosphere, which contributes to the enthusiasm pupil's display for school activities. Pupils take part in massed choir performances with other schools and give school performances to which the public is invited. They use their talents well to entertain old people in the nearby residential home.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. Pupils at the end of both key stages attain the standards expected for their ages. By the time they are seven, pupils understand how to play team games. They know how to work with partners when passing a ball and how to find a space so that someone can pass to them. In dance lessons they make up interesting sequences of movements by changing the steps they use and the shapes they make. They express feelings and moods through their dances and often work together satisfactorily to perform set pieces. In one lesson, for example, the reception class pupils improvised movements to lively music and used jumping, marching and stretching movements with a good sense of rhythm. By the time pupils are eleven, most reach a satisfactory standard. Nearly a third of pupils achieve standards higher than expected in gymnastics and dance. In a Year 6 dance lesson, for example, the pupils not only perfected a complex routine but showed that they understood the need to prepare safely for vigorous exercise by warming up carefully. The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in swimming matches the national expectation.
129. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection. This is because the school makes good use of specialist teachers from a local high school to teach some of the lessons and to provide good guidance to class teachers. The high school also provides valuable extra support from skilled coaches who give the pupils individual skills training.
130. The quality of teaching is good overall at both key stages. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject. They prepare appropriate warm-up activities and explain them clearly. This helps pupils to learn about the effects of exercise on their bodies. In one Year 6 lesson, for example, the teacher explained which movements stretched which groups of muscles and why. This helped the pupils to understand the benefits and dangers of exercising. In a reception class lesson, the teacher skilfully introduced warm-up activities using a memorable rhyme. This helped the pupils to learn how to warm-up safely and was well adapted to the low stamina of many of the pupils and the high proportion who suffer from asthma. Most teachers plan their lessons well. They make the activities interesting and challenging. This encourages pupils to work hard to improve. Teachers use a good range of methods, including demonstration, individual, paired and small group work, to help pupils think about how they could improve their

performance. Pupils, therefore, know what they are good at and what they need to work on. Teachers are particularly good at managing their pupils and insist upon high levels of discipline. This helps pupils' learning because very little time is wasted and pupils are keen to show what they can do. Pupils who have special educational needs do well because teachers support them and make sure that they have a clear idea of what to do. Pupils make good progress because much of the teaching is good. In the lessons seen, teachers and pupils showed enthusiasm for the subject and a willingness to work together to raise standards. However, some teachers do not have a satisfactory way of assessing the progress of their pupils. For example, in a Key Stage 2 athletics lesson, the teacher did not insist upon accurate measurements of the pupils' performances.

131. The school provides an appropriate range of after school activities, including football and dance. The work seen in dance is of a very high standard. It is clear that the pupils hugely enjoy what they do and are very committed to giving their best. They represented the Local Education Authority in a dance demonstration at the Millennium Dome, and through their performance brought credit to themselves, their school and their teachers. Dance contributes significantly to pupils' personal and social development. The subject is well managed. One of the strengths of its provision is the school's very useful links with a local high school that has sports college status. The way the school works with its secondary partner is helping to stimulate interest among pupils and is driving up standards. The school has recently invested in better quality equipment to support the pupils' learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

132. Standards in religious education have been maintained since the last inspection and are satisfactory by the end of both key stages. The policy and scheme of work are currently being updated in the light of changes to the Locally Agreed Syllabus, which provides a clear sequence to the development of skills, knowledge and understanding. It is beginning to include more opportunities for first hand experiences. Heavy emphasis is placed on the need for pupils to work together in peace and harmony and good opportunities are provided for pupils to share views and beliefs, not only of their own religion, but those of others. This is effective in promoting pupils' feelings of respect and tolerance for religions other than their own. Pupils receive their religious education through lessons and assemblies as well as through general school activities.
133. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn about special events in their own lives such as christenings and birthdays. They explore feelings such as happiness, sadness and fear in understanding how better to cope with their own emotions. They describe the qualities which constitute a 'best friend'. Pupils are beginning to understand that the Bible teaches people about the importance of telling the truth and being good, although their low command of language makes it difficult for them to express their views clearly. In learning about making sacrifices, they decide what they will give up for Lent and show an appropriate understanding of special times in the Christian year, such as Easter and Christmas.

134. By the age of eleven pupils have a sound understanding and knowledge of Christianity and other religions. They identify similarities and differences between Christianity, Islam and Sikhism. For example, because of very good, sensitive teaching during a Year 6 lesson, pupils learnt the importance to Muslims of washing thoroughly before praying, or touching the Qu'ran. All pupils recognize the importance of applying Christian values to everyday life because teachers work hard to establish an environment where care and respect are the norm. Pupils recite some of the Ten Commandments from memory and link them to their own experiences, at the same time demonstrating an awareness of the importance of living by a set of rules. During a good lesson in Year 4, taken by the Year 5 teacher, pupils explored the significance of symbols in the other religions, and the good quality and use of resources developed their understanding further. Effective use is made of places of worship in the local area and pupils are developing a sound understanding of the significance, for example, of stained glass windows, porches and belfrys and their place in history.
135. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Pupils receive good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills through discussions in class and group activities, although their command of language is limited and they do not always retain key vocabulary. However, the use of writing is less well developed and pupils do not sufficiently demonstrate their knowledge of significant teaching points through its use. This means that pupils do not always achieve as well as they should. Nevertheless, a good example was seen in a Year 6 lesson, when pupils produced sensitive, thoughtful poetry in acrostic style, following a lesson on sacred books.
136. Great emphasis is placed on the development of pupils' moral, social, cultural and spiritual values. As a result, pupils show respect and consideration for others' beliefs and values, they behave well in lessons, and treat others with respect. Issues related to racism are very effectively dealt with and the very good relationships between staff and pupils are extremely effective in raising pupils' self esteem and in helping them to value themselves as part of the community. Their social conscience is aroused when considering those less fortunate than themselves, such as those in children's homes. This is further developed through regular visits to the neighbouring old people's home.
137. Although no teaching was seen in Key Stage 1, this was judged to be satisfactory following discussions with staff and pupils and analysis of pupils' work. Although in two of the three lessons seen in Key Stage 2 teaching was good, it is judged to be satisfactory overall when other evidence, such as analysis of pupils' work, is taken into consideration. Teachers display a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subject, they are well prepared, and they use resources well. They show sensitivity to the needs of their pupils. In good lessons teachers use their own personal beliefs as an example, they make good links to previous learning and activities are planned to capture the pupils' attention and spark their imagination. For example, a 'feely' box was used in one lesson to enable pupils to describe their feelings on touching symbols and artefacts. Occasionally teachers do not capitalise on learning opportunities. For example, during a video lesson on symbolism, the teacher did not stop the tape to

reinforce each significant point. This led to confusion among pupils because too many ideas were introduced at once.

138. The subject is satisfactorily managed with clearly stated priorities for development. However, although planning identifies clear lesson intentions, it does not include planning for pupils' individual needs; therefore pupils are often given the same task, regardless of ability. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent in some classes and occasionally teachers do not insist that pupils complete unfinished work. This results in a lowering of standards in some lessons. Good use is made of visits by the local clergy, and other visitors include male as well as female role models from other religions.