

INSPECTION REPORT

BROOKFIELDS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hockley, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103175

Headteacher: Miss J Williams

Reporting inspector: Mr C Kessell
20695

Dates of inspection: 17th - 20th September 2001

Inspection number: 218175

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	2 Hingeston Street Hockley Birmingham
Postcode:	B18 6PU
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Marlene Hinds
Date of previous inspection:	November 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20695	Mr C Kessell	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed What the school should do to improve further
19696	Mrs J Moorhouse	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works with parents
18709	Mrs N Bee	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Geography Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
7593	Mr J Collier	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Religious education	
18342	Mrs M Spark	Team inspector	English History Provision for pupils with special educational needs English as an additional language Equal opportunities	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school has 177 full-time pupils (87 boys and 90 girls aged 4 - 11) and a designated nursery that offers 39 places. It is about average in size and is situated in the centre of Birmingham close to the Jewellery Quarter. The attainment of the pupils when they start school is below average. The percentage of pupils that leave or join the school during the academic year is high. The school draws mainly from housing that is either council or housing association owned. The majority of pupils come from Black Caribbean backgrounds although a number of other ethnic groups are found in the school including pupils from Bangladeshi, Indian and White United Kingdom backgrounds. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is high when compared to other schools. Twenty-five per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs; this is above the national average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average. A large number of teachers have either joined or left the school during the last two years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school that provides a friendly and caring environment for its pupils. Although standards are still not high enough, they have improved recently. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but there are significant numbers of good or very good lessons. Pupils are making satisfactory progress overall. There is a strong commitment amongst the staff and governors to continue improving standards and the quality of education. With staffing now stable, there is the capacity to succeed. The headteacher manages the school well and has a clear educational vision. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is consistently good or better in the nursery and in Years 4 and 5.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are well behaved. Relationships through the school are good.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are good and the parents' views of the school are very positive.
- The headteacher's leadership provides clear educational direction.
- The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) through the school.
- The use of assessment procedures.
- The proportion of good teaching.
- The management of some subjects.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and carers of children in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS PREVIOUS INSPECTION

Improvement since the previous inspection in 1999 has been satisfactory overall and some of the progress made against the key issues identified in the previous report has been good. Although standards are improving in English, mathematics and science through the school, they are still not high enough. The school is now well placed to continue improving standards in ICT. The quality of teaching has improved and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is now substantially lower than during the previous inspection. The school now has a full-time permanent teaching staff in place. There have

been significant improvements in the management of the school and its financial planning. The improvements in these two areas have been good. The school no longer has serious weaknesses.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	D	E	C
Mathematics	E	E	E	D
Science	E	E	E*	E

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

Results of the 2000 national tests indicated that English and mathematics were well below the national average. Standards in science were very low, within the bottom 5% nationally. When compared with schools of a similar nature, standards were average in English, below average in mathematics and well below average in science. Although standards are not high enough, there has been recent improvement in the school. National comparisons were not available at the time of the inspection, but the 2001 results at the end of Year 6 show that the percentages of pupils that achieved the expected level 4 in English, mathematics and science have improved on the previous year. In addition to this, the percentages of pupils achieving the higher level 5 have also significantly improved in all three subjects. There have also been significant improvements in the 2001 national test results at the end of Year 2. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have risen.

Current standards in the school are still below average in English, mathematics and science in Year 2 (the end of Key Stage 1) and Year 6 (the end of Key Stage 2). Pupils start school with attainment that is below average and throughout the school the percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above average. In addition to this, the number of pupils who move in and out of the school is high, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. All of these factors have an adverse effect on standards as do the high levels of absence of some pupils, but the school is not complacent about its results and is determined that they should rise. The school did not quite achieve its target in mathematics but exceeded the target in English. The needs of gifted pupils are well met.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils have good attitudes to learning. They enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour in the classroom, in the playground and when moving around the school is good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils enjoy responsibility and their personal development is satisfactory. Relationships are good.
Attendance	Attendance is below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good

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

The majority of lessons observed during the inspection were satisfactory. There was some very good teaching in the nursery and Years 4 and 5. Few good lessons were seen in Key Stage 1. Where teaching was good or better, lessons were well planned and behaviour was managed very well; pupils learnt effectively and made good progress. Time was used well and lessons were conducted at a good pace with much being achieved in the time available. The individual needs of all pupils were well addressed, as were the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Literacy and numeracy lessons are generally well planned but the skills associated with these areas of learning are not always well promoted in other subjects. In some lessons judged to be satisfactory overall, classroom management could have been more effective. In these lessons pupils' learning was not so rapid. Pupils' learning through the school is satisfactory overall.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a satisfactory curriculum for its pupils and fulfils all statutory requirements. Appropriate provision is made for religious education. The school works hard to include all pupils in the curriculum that it offers.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The management of special educational needs is good and there is effective, caring provision. These pupils make good progress in literacy and numeracy.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	These pupils are provided with good quality support but the provision is not always directed to the pupils with the most needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Moral and social development are good and well promoted through the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a secure, supportive and happy environment. It takes good care of its pupils. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress require more development. The partnership between the school and parents is satisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's leadership provides good, clear educational direction. She is well supported by the deputy head. Teaching is particularly well monitored. The roles of other key staff, for example subject co-ordinators and key stage leaders, are underdeveloped.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have developed well since the previous inspection and have a far better understanding of their role. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are well led by the chair of governors.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school uses data and assessment information well in English and mathematics. However, this does not extend to other subjects, for example science. Although teaching is well monitored there are weaknesses in the monitoring and evaluation of standards and pupils' progress in some subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Staff and resources are deployed appropriately. During some lessons, time could be used more effectively, as could the school library. Overall the school's accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The school has a good number of teachers and support staff. The school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily in its financial planning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nursery provision. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems. • The school helps children to become mature and responsible. • Visits out of school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work to do at home.

The above views are taken from the pre-inspection meeting that was attended by only three parents, discussions with parents during the inspection and from the 37 responses to the parents' questionnaire. The inspection team support the parents' positive views. The school has a satisfactory homework policy that identifies in general terms what parents should expect. It is down to individual class teachers to decide when to send work home, however, and very little homework was given out during the inspection. The school would acknowledge that this is an area for development; the current rate of return for homework that is given out is poor.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Children enter the nursery with levels of attainment that are well below average. They make good progress in the nursery and enter the reception class with attainment that is below average. Progress in the reception class is not so rapid because there is less good and very good teaching. As part of their personal, social and emotional development the importance of listening to adults and each other is taught well in the nursery. This is not continued in the reception class where some children shout out, and listening skills are not so well developed. Behaviour is good throughout the Foundation Stage and children show positive attitudes to learning, but by the end of the reception class their personal, social and emotional development will not reach the levels expected for children of this age. The same can be said for the children's communication, language and literacy skills. In the nursery, language skills are well promoted and the children confidently give answers to questions provided by the teacher. In the reception class children handle books carefully but many are reluctant to talk and communicate with limited vocabulary. A significant proportion of the children have English as an additional language and are not provided with sufficient specialist support. The children's mathematical development is below that expected. Only the more able pupils in the reception class identify numbers up to ten and understand simple addition and subtraction problems. The children's mathematical vocabulary is underdeveloped. The children are starting to develop a simple understanding of their bodies and in reception learn about plants and how they grow. They develop their knowledge of time by looking at people who are older than they are, but because of their limited language skills find this difficult. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is not as developed as one would expect for children of this age. Their physical development is appropriate for their age. The children move confidently and listen well to instructions in physical education lessons and handle scissors, paint brushes and pencils sensibly. They enjoy singing songs and play well together. Children create satisfactory artwork using techniques such as collage, printing, painting and drawing. Their creative development is in line with that expected for children of their age.

2 National test results for 2000 for the pupils in Year 2 show that attainment was below average for reading, and well below average for writing and mathematics. Although these standards are not high enough, they are an improvement on 1999 when the school had its previous inspection. When compared to similar schools, standards were well above average in reading, below average in writing and well below average in mathematics. Although there are currently no national comparisons available, the school's test results in Year 2 for 2001 show a significant improvement on the previous year. The percentages of pupils reaching the expected level 2 have increased significantly, particularly in writing and mathematics. The percentages of pupils who achieved the higher level 3 have also increased, particularly in writing and mathematics which were low in 2000. There is also likely to be a significant improvement when these results are compared against those from similar schools.

3 Standards in the current Year 2 are below average in English, mathematics and science. These pupils had a disrupted Year 1 when they were taught by a number of supply teachers and did not achieve as well as they should have done. The school is not complacent, and has a number of strategies in place, for example targeted support of individuals and groups of pupils, to try and remedy this situation. By the time they are seven the pupils' speaking and listening skills are below average. Not all pupils listen attentively and they are not always prepared to take turns when responding to questions or in class discussions. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are able to read a range of books accurately and use contents pages and indexes when researching information. Although the majority of pupils enjoy books, there are those who do not read fluently and are not so confident when explaining the contents of a book. The quality of written work is below average. Although higher attaining pupils are able to write independently, many pupils are unable to organise their writing effectively and it is poorly presented. The pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding is below average. Although higher attaining pupils are beginning to use tens and units, many pupils have a limited understanding of the value of numbers and mathematical terms. In science pupils identify the external parts of the body

and can describe the effects of exercise, but their use of scientific language is underdeveloped and they are unable to communicate their findings clearly.

4 The national test results in 2000 for the Year 6 pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 show that standards in English and mathematics were well below average. Standards in science were very low in comparison with the national average and represented the bottom five per cent. Against similar schools, standards were average in English, below average in mathematics and well below average in science. These results were not as good as 1999 although there was a significant improvement in the percentage of pupils who achieved the expected level 4 in science. The results for 2001 show a clear improvement on the previous year with a higher percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in all three subjects, significantly so in science. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 5 was significantly higher in all three subjects. Despite these improvements the school did not quite achieve its statutory target in mathematics for 2001. The English target was exceeded. Current standards in Year 6 are below average in English, mathematics and science.

5 At the age of eleven many pupils have a limited vocabulary and they are not always able to offer opinions or explore ideas. They are unable to engage in debate and can appear unwilling. Pupils do not read with confidence or fluency and many have limited strategies to establish the meanings of words they do not understand or cannot read. They do not always present their work neatly and some work has many crossings out and mistakes, and handwriting is not joined. The pupils' use of language is limited in their writing and sentences show a restricted vocabulary. In mathematics higher attaining pupils work confidently with addition, subtraction, multiplication and division involving numbers to 1000. However, lower attaining pupils have difficulty in setting out their work systematically and still have a below average understanding of place value. Many of the Year 6 pupils will achieve appropriate levels in science at the end of the year. They are able to discuss scientific investigations, understand the need for fair testing and make sensible predictions. However, about twenty-five per cent of the year group have a more limited knowledge of scientific ideas.

6 There is a recent trend of improvement in the school at both key stages. This is against a background of socio-economic and educational disadvantage. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above the national average and the percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is high. The number of pupils who leave and join the school, particularly between Years 3 and 6 is high. For example, only seventy-five per cent of the pupils in last year's Year 6 were in the school through the whole of Key Stage 2. The achievements of these pupils were satisfactory. However, not all of the pupils in the 2000 Year 6 made the progress they were capable of in relation to their prior attainment. This is the result of some weak teaching for these pupils during Key Stage 2. The school has done its best to address any weaknesses in teaching and limit the use of temporary and supply teachers. There have been some differences in the performance of boys and girls, with boys not performing as well as girls in Key Stage 1 and then the reverse at Key Stage 2. This is recognised by the school in the school improvement plan and appropriate strategies are in place to address the issue. When responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire, ninety-five per cent of parents agreed with the statement that their child was making good progress in the school. During the last academic year, gifted mathematicians were provided with an opportunity to study for and sit GCSE mathematics.

7 The level of expertise offered by support staff working with pupils identified as having special educational needs ensures good progress for these pupils in literacy and numeracy. Progress in other subjects is satisfactory. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in the nursery, where they are well supported and staff work well on the development of speaking and listening skills for all children. These pupils make satisfactory progress in the rest of the school, although there is sometimes a lack of any specific focus or support for identified needs.

8 Standards in some of the other subjects are not high enough, especially in art and design, design and technology, geography and information and communication technology (ICT). In most of these subjects pupils' achievement has been inconsistent and they have not made satisfactory progress. Much of this is the result of unsatisfactory teaching in previous academic years and failure by some teachers to cover the designated curriculum. Standards in history, physical education and

religious education are similar to those found in other schools. During the inspection it was not possible to make a judgement about standards or pupils' progress in music, but the provision for this subject is unsatisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9 Pupils' attitudes to school are good. This is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection when pupils' attitudes were judged to be satisfactory. In the majority of situations, pupils work purposefully and demonstrate a positive attitude to learning and an interest in what is being taught. Inspectors saw noteworthy examples of this in during an ICT lesson where pupils applied themselves enthusiastically and during a dance lesson where pupils sustained concentration and diligently applied themselves to each task set. All of the parents replying to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and those at the parents' meeting, agreed their children enjoy coming to school. Pupils are capable of careful presentation of their work, although there is inconsistency in standards and expectations from staff. In mathematics and art pupils handle and share resources confidently and sensibly and they co-operate well when working in pairs during lessons in ICT and dance.

10 At the time of the previous inspection behaviour was satisfactory, with most pupils behaving well. During the current inspection, inspectors found behaviour to be good. In the majority of situations staff handle isolated incidents of misbehaviour promptly and consistently according to the guidelines set out in the school's behaviour policy. During the inspection, inspectors saw evidence of some deterioration in classroom behaviour when staff responses were inconsistent and expectations low. The vast majority of parents replying to the questionnaire agree or strongly agree that behaviour in the school is good. Seven pupils were excluded from school in the last year as a result of poor behaviour.

11 Pupils respond willingly to the opportunities for them to be involved in the life of the school. Each class displays its own rules that pupils help to write. The majority of pupils have responsibilities within their classrooms and help to keep shared areas tidy and the playground free of litter. Pupils enjoy being librarians, operating the music centre during assembly, helping in the dining hall and being members of the school council. They carry out these responsibilities sensibly and maturely. All of these responsibilities make a contribution to pupils' personal development. When talking to pupils, inspectors found them to be friendly, polite and courteous. Pupils accept the limited responsibilities that are given to them in lessons. For instance, in a dance lesson pupils used their imagination and initiative to devise their own interpretations of actions and gestures and in an ICT lesson they discussed the task set sensibly. Pupils handle these opportunities maturely and enthusiastically.

12 Relationships in the school are good which is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection. No incidents of unkind behaviour were observed between pupils, and in the playground good relationships between different groups of pupils were seen. No incidents of bullying were observed or reported. The good quality of the relationships among pupils and teachers has a positive effect on pupils' personal development and achievement.

13 Attendance at the school during the last school year was well below the national average and had not improved since the time of the previous inspection. There are a small number of pupils who are persistent absentees or who are late in arriving. A small number of parents do not co-operate as well as they might in helping the school to improve the situation and some do not fulfil their responsibility for ensuring that their children arrive promptly and regularly. Unauthorised absence is above average.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14 At the time of the previous inspection there were serious weaknesses in the quality of teaching, particularly at Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. Twenty-seven per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory or poor. The school, and in particular the headteacher, has worked very hard to address the weaknesses in teaching identified in the previous report. During the current inspection forty-eight per cent of lessons were satisfactory, thirty-five per cent good and thirteen per cent very good and two per cent excellent. One lesson was unsatisfactory. However, these overall statistics disguise some significant variations. The majority of the good or very good teaching was observed in the nursery or in Key Stage 2.

Teaching in Years 4 and 5 was of a consistently high standard and was where most of the very good teaching was seen. The single excellent lesson observed was in a Year 4 literacy session. Most teaching in Key Stage 1 was satisfactory and in many of these lessons teachers were provided with additional adult support through classroom assistants or support teachers. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is no longer a serious weakness, but remains an area for development. The school does not have to rely any longer on supply teachers or temporary staff so it is well placed to continue improving teaching. Scrutiny of pupils' previous work shows that teaching and learning were no better than satisfactory during the previous academic year when the school had to rely on some temporary staff. In some subjects, for example geography, pupils have not learnt effectively and have not made sufficient progress. When responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire the small sample of parents agreed that teaching in the school was good.

15 Although satisfactory overall, teaching in the Foundation Stage is not consistent. Teaching in the nursery is good and there are high expectations of children's behaviour and attitudes to work. Speaking and listening skills are particularly well promoted and all adults interact well with the children to reinforce the skills and knowledge that have been taught. Consequently the children are keen to learn. They apply good effort to their work and maintain their concentration in all of their activities. Because of the high expectations, behaviour in the nursery is good and this has also contributed to good progress. Although teaching is satisfactory in the reception class, there are not the same expectations regarding the children's behaviour. Adults are often prepared to talk over the noise of the children and listening skills are not being developed appropriately. Children's learning is not so effective. The teacher in the reception class is new to the school and is working hard to develop good practice.

16 Teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. Very little good teaching was observed during the inspection and the one unsatisfactory lesson was observed in this key stage. Although the majority of teaching was satisfactory, there were areas for development, particularly in the management of pupils and teachers' expectations. In some lessons the control of the pupils was only just adequate and noise levels were often too high. Some lessons suffered through all pupils being given the same work and the pace of the lesson being too leisurely. Although many of the pupils were well supported by classroom assistants and learnt effectively, some pupils, particularly the higher attainers, could have been challenged more. Insufficient attention is paid to how pupils present their work and in many cases this is poor. It should be noted that both teachers in Years 1 and 2 are new to the school. Pupils now in Year 2 had a particularly disrupted previous year that affected their learning and progress over time. To their credit, both of the teachers in Key Stage 1 are working hard to develop their classroom management and control. During the inspection they raised the pace of working and pupils' interest and concentration.

17 During the inspection teaching in Key Stage 2 was good overall. Seventy-two per cent of the lessons seen in this key stage were good or better. The very good lessons were characterised by clear planning and immediate and brisk starts to the teaching sessions. When teachers were introducing their lessons or having a summary discussion at the end, they involved a wide range of pupils, often through very good open questioning. Work was effectively planned for a range of abilities so that all pupils learnt well. Higher attaining pupils were appropriately challenged whilst lower attaining pupils did not find themselves out of their depth and were well supported. In these lessons there were always high expectations regarding pupils' behaviour and the standard of work that could be achieved. Pupils were encouraged to listen to one another or adults in the class and particular emphasis was placed on reinforcing language and vocabulary associated with a particular subject. For example, in a Year 4 science lesson, where pupils were investigating which materials successfully conduct electricity, pupils were encouraged to formulate questions that could be scientifically investigated and to make predictions using the correct scientific terminology and methodology. In a very good Year 5 physical education lesson a challenging class succeeded in composing dance sequences to the *Blue Peter* theme music. This was a result of the teacher's own high standards, her insistence on correct behaviour and her high expectations regarding the quality of dance movement. A lesson that started with indifferent pupil participation became an exciting session with pupils absorbed in what they were doing and achieving. The one excellent lesson was in a Year 4 literacy session looking at non-fiction texts. This lesson was dynamic and had an urgency about it. The class teacher showed very strong

subject knowledge, developed the pupils' own use of language and constantly reinforced listening skills. Work was very clearly and precisely targeted for each ability group. Consequently, learning was very effective in this lesson. Pupils made significant gains in their understanding and knowledge.

18 Teachers conduct literacy and numeracy lessons to the recommended structure and timing and the majority plan work satisfactorily using the national strategies. However, literacy and numeracy skills are not well developed in other subjects and in a number of lessons speaking and listening skills are not well promoted. Although the main activities in literacy and numeracy lessons are planned for different ability groups, this process is still not rigorous enough in some other lessons. This prevents some pupils from learning as effectively as they could and in some classes higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently. This was particularly noticeable when looking through the pupils' work from last year.

19 Teachers generally have a secure grasp of the subjects that they are teaching and some individual teachers have particular strengths, for example the religious education subject co-ordinator. On some occasions teachers are not so secure in their knowledge and understanding. There are weaknesses in physical education and ICT. There are also weaknesses in the teachers' day-to-day assessments of the pupils. Time at the end of lessons is not always used well to evaluate the pupils' progress against what they were expected to achieve. Teachers' marking is very inconsistent and in many instances does not follow the recommendations of the school's marking policy. Scrutiny of pupils' work showed some examples of work not being marked at all. There were very few examples of teachers writing perceptive comments that support pupils and give suggestions on how work could be improved next time. In the school's defence, some of this work would have been marked by temporary or supply teachers during the last academic year. It is left to individual class teachers to provide homework. It was not consistently handed out during the inspection to support the work in lessons. This is an area of development for the school.

20 There has been a big improvement in the work within classrooms for pupils with special education needs since the previous inspection. The work provided within class is well matched to needs, and in literacy and numeracy lessons meets the requirements of individual education plans very effectively. Work in other subjects is not always so appropriate for pupils with special educational needs and there is rarely any support in other lessons. The quality of support offered by the classroom assistants is good. They contribute much to the pupils' learning.

21 The teaching for the pupils who have English as an additional language is good in the nursery where speaking and listening skills are given a high priority. The support given by classroom assistants across the school ensures that these pupils make satisfactory progress.

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

22 The school teaches all subjects of the National Curriculum and provides satisfactorily for all of its pupils. All statutory requirements are met and appropriate provision is made for religious education. A long-term plan of what is to be taught each year is broken down into subjects and teachers plan lessons using the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy. The new national guidelines, sometimes linked to existing schemes of work, are used for the other subjects. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and ensures that skills, knowledge and understanding are taught progressively. The co-ordinators are all reviewing this system and developing guidelines that are specific to their school. Lesson planning for all subjects is satisfactory and is an improvement on the previous academic year when learning objectives were not always clearly identified. However, apart from English and mathematics, teachers are not all evaluating their lessons systematically and this affects ultimately the progress the pupils make over time and the standards achieved. Sometimes it takes too long for teachers to settle their pupils between lessons. An added weakness is that lessons are occasionally too long, for example some science lessons, and others, such as some ICT lessons, are too short. This affects the balance of the curriculum. This was an issue in the previous inspection and has not yet been successfully addressed.

23 The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is sound. A new area where the children under five are taught has recently been developed. Activities are well structured to cover all areas of learning and the nursery and the reception classes are joined by a spacious area, which is used for both classes. There are regular opportunities for structured outside play for the children in the nursery and the reception classes.

24 Satisfactory provision is made for personal, social and health education, including sex education and information on drug misuse. It is planned through different areas of the curriculum such as science and physical education lessons. Teachers follow clear guidelines during weekly lessons when relevant personal and social issues are discussed. For example past work clearly shows that children in Year 3 have learnt about healthy diets and Year 4 have talked about issues relating to bullying. The co-ordinator that has responsibility for this area has recently had training regarding the development of the teaching of citizenship in the school and is in the process of updating the teachers' guidelines. Visitors such as the school nurse and the local police are invited into school to talk to the children about different topics, for example how to keep themselves safe. This greatly enhances this area.

25 Anti-racist teaching and equality of provision are fully integrated into the curriculum, raising self-esteem and developing confidence very effectively for all pupils regardless of ethnicity or gender. Work within withdrawal groups for pupils with special educational needs is effectively matched to individual education plans and carefully monitored by the co-ordinator.

26 Strategies for the teaching of literacy are satisfactory; however, although the literacy hour has been successfully implemented, teachers, do not effectively promote speaking and listening skills in other lessons. The teaching of the numeracy strategy is satisfactory but again, the development of numeracy skills could be better promoted across the curriculum.

27 The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities that is open to pupils of all abilities and includes sporting activities such as football in which girls and boys take part. The girls' football team recently won a local competition. Pupils have the opportunity to develop their drawing and painting skills at an art club. Past work shows that they have made collage pictures of flowers. There is also a library club. No activities were observed during the week of the inspection.

28 All children have the opportunity to participate in a good selection of educational visits. Pupils in all year groups have opportunities to participate in these visits. For example all children in the Foundation Stage visited Wonderland in Telford and pupils in Years 1 and 2 visited the National Forest. Year 4 pupils visited the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and Year 5 went to a local Jewish Synagogue. Pupils in Year 6 went to the Midlands Art Centre. These visits enriched the curriculum and supported teaching and learning well. Links with the local schools are satisfactory. Teachers from the many receiving secondary schools are invited in to talk to the children in Year 6. This helps them to select their next school.

29 There are good links with the community, in particular when people come in and talk to pupils in assembly and at other times during the school day. These visitors support the curriculum well. For example, a visitor spoke to the whole school about a range of animals which he also brought in for them to see and handle and a parent bought in some snakes for the children to look at and learn about. The school works closely with a local group that gives support to families in need. There are links with local leisure centres and children use these facilities, for example when they take part in football tournaments. The local area is used well when the children study their local environment or when the school choir sing in services at one of the local churches. The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra has also played in the school.

30 The provision that the school makes for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils has changed very little since the previous inspection. It remains good overall. The school has

drawn up a useful policy detailing the role that teachers can play in promoting these aspects of personal development and how success can be monitored and evaluated.

31 Provision for pupils' spiritual development continues to be satisfactory. Good opportunities for reflection or discussion are often provided in religious education lessons as when pupils in Year 5 think about Jesus' words 'Blessed are those that mourn for they shall be comforted' in connection with the recent tragedy in New York. Teachers however are not always sensitive to opportunities for reflection that arise in other lessons and they do not routinely plan for them.

32 Daily assemblies are held in which pupils are invited to pray or think about the story that has been told. This provides a satisfactory opportunity for spiritual reflection at the beginning of the school day. Assemblies are planned around a series of themes that reinforce sound moral teachings and introduce pupils to the traditions of Christianity and other world religions. Festivals such as Christmas, Diwali and Hannukah are celebrated and important qualities such as compassion or perseverance are illustrated with appropriate stories. Pupils are very well behaved as they enter and leave the hall while music is playing. However, no reference is made to the composer or the title and an opportunity to enhance their cultural development is missed. Assemblies fail to generate a feeling of warmth. Teachers do not attend and so are unable to follow up the theme in class. As at the previous inspection, there is no singing, except for the school song in one assembly and the pupils have few opportunities to contribute. When given the chance they are eager to join in, as was seen in one assembly where they were keen to answer the question, "Who is compassionate in the story about Dogger?"

33 Provision for pupils' moral development remains good. Moral issues are regularly explored in assemblies and the school's Code of Conduct is displayed widely. Right and wrong actions are recognised through a very clear behaviour policy that is enhanced by teachers who draw up specific rules for the class with their pupils. In Year 5, for example, it is called a 'behaviour agreement'. Teachers adhere closely to the behaviour policy and issue rewards such as stickers, marbles and celebration letters when pupils display good work or behaviour. A 'Congratulations Assembly' recognises good efforts publicly. Pupils are aware of the consequences of wrong-doing and a recently introduced 'time-out' bench on the playground at lunch-time mirrors a sanction used in lessons.

34 Provision for pupils' social development is good. There is a School Council and pupils are encouraged to express any worries to an elected member. Relationships in the school are good and pupils are expected to help each other. Year 6 pupils become prefects and are given specific responsibilities around the school. For example, they organise the music for assemblies or are librarians. Opportunities for interaction outside lessons are provided through out-of-school clubs and through a good programme of visits to places of educational interest such as the National Forest or the Black Country Museum. A residential visit is also organised for older pupils. Some thirty pupils regularly attend the Saturday morning 'Children's University'. Amongst other advantages, this enables them to mix with pupils from other schools and is a new initiative since the previous inspection.

35 Pupils' cultural development is satisfactorily promoted. Through their religious education lessons they learn about the beliefs, traditions and values of the major world faiths and, in an exciting initiative set up since the previous inspection, they experience a range of visits to the local church, synagogue and pagoda under the auspices of an inter-faith arts project. Art and music, however, are not playing as important a part in the cultural life of the school as at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils have difficulty in naming a famous artist other than Van Gogh and they struggle to name a famous composer. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the local area through their geography and history studies. For example the school log-book provides original source material for discovering what happened in the Second World War when the school was bombed. Visitors to the school, such as the local police officer talking to Year 1 and 2 about road safety issues, widen pupils' knowledge of their local community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36 Brookfields takes good care of its pupils. The school environment is secure, supportive and happy and makes a positive contribution to pupils' progress. The deputy headteacher takes the lead on pastoral care and support for vulnerable pupils and supports staff development on pastoral care. The procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare are good. The school has good relations with personnel from outside agencies involved in pupil care. All necessary procedures are in place for reporting and recording cases for accident or illness. The health and safety policy names the designated personnel, including a governor. It is relevant to the school and includes comprehensive details of roles and responsibilities. Supervision during lunchtime is satisfactorily organised through a rota of eleven supervisors. The school improvement plan includes the provision of on-site training for lunchtime supervisors in behaviour management and supporting children's play. Two supervisors take responsibility for organising the use of playground equipment. This has improved lunchtime provision and playground behaviour. Pupils treat lunchtime supervisors with politeness and courtesy. There is useful daily contact between the senior supervisor and the headteacher.

37 There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, which is rewarded both individually and with whole class awards. Individual pupils are rewarded with praise, stickers, a congratulations certificate and celebration letters sent to parents. Class rewards, earned by filling a jar with marbles that are given for good behaviour or good work, are negotiated with the pupils and may be extra playtime, a video or extra time in a physical education lesson. The school's policy on behaviour is explained to parents in the school prospectus and includes the code of conduct and how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. There is a good anti-bullying policy that clearly states the school's attitude towards bullying and the actions it will take in managing reported incidents.

38 The school's procedures for monitoring absence and lateness are good. The clerical assistant carefully monitors absence and follows up unexplained absences by telephone on the first day. Parents are encouraged to get their children to school on time and ensure good attendance through the school brochure. Good attendance and punctuality are rewarded by termly individual awards and weekly class awards. These awards are presented at the weekly celebration assembly when parents are invited. Staff know their pupils well and monitor their personal development in an informal way. At the time of the inspection, however, the school did not have a formal means of producing a written record of personal development.

39 There is no analysis of the acquisition of basic language skills of pupils for whom English is an additional language. There is a higher proportion of these children in the reception class who do not always receive the support that they should. This is a weakness in provision.

40 The school has not made satisfactory progress in the effective use of assessment procedures since the time of the previous inspection. Assessment procedures are satisfactory in English and mathematics and there is a system for pupil tracking in place for these subjects. A training programme for staff has improved practice in assessment and target setting. Teachers regularly assess the learning in English and mathematics to identify what the pupils have learnt and keep records of what individuals can do. Each half term the school has a planned assessment week when teachers use tests to assess each half-termly unit of work against objectives taught. The test results are used to set achievable targets for groups and individuals. The targets are shared with pupils and set out in individual target books. Individual pupils' targets are shared with their parents during parents' meetings. The marking policy includes a code for indicating the learning objective has been achieved and the target met. In the majority of the remaining subjects the school plans lessons using the new national guidelines but has yet to implement the assessment procedures recommended for these subjects. Teachers' planning does not clearly indicate that assessment opportunities are clearly identified. There is little evidence of on-going assessment changing planning for lessons because pupils have learned more or less than expected. Good use is made of support assistants to record observations and make assessments, especially during the introduction to literacy and numeracy lessons. The headteacher is aware of the need to continue to develop assessment procedures and to monitor assessment practice carefully. The school fully complies with the requirements to administer statutory tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 and these test results are analysed. Pupils are tested at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. These results are analysed and used to feed into the tracking system in order to move individual and groups of pupils forward.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41 There is a satisfactory partnership between parents and the school, as there was at the time of the previous inspection. Parents' views of the school are very positive. Almost all parents responding to the questionnaire agree or strongly agree that the school works closely with them. Regular and useful meetings that are well attended are held to inform parents about the curriculum. Parents receive frequent newsletters produced in an attractive and readable style. Letters to parents are well presented and informative. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting agreed that the information about what is happening in school is good. All parents replying to the questionnaire agree or strongly agree that they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. The school prospectus is well presented and contains useful and relevant information. A small number of parents help in school on a regular basis, particularly in the nursery. A larger number of parents are involved helping on school visits and during the weekly swimming lessons. Parental satisfaction with the school encourages the pupils' enjoyment of school.

42 Almost all parents replying to the questionnaire agree or strongly agree that they are kept well informed about how their child is getting on. There are three parents' meetings each year that are all well attended. Reports contain a systematic record of pupils' academic progress and some information on personal progress. However, there is no indication of individual pupil targets for the next school year. There is a lack of information on subjects beyond English, mathematics and science regarding the actual achievements of individual pupils.

43 Although most are satisfied, a significant minority of parents do not think that their child has the right amount of work to do at home. The school prospectus contains detailed information related to homework, including the amount of time to be spent each week, the type of homework pupils will receive, including reading, and the role of the parent. However, no information is included about the days when pupils are given homework and which subjects will be given. During the inspection reading books and spelling lists were taken home. In some instances, homework was included in teachers' planning but little work was provided to support the pupils' learning at school. The rate of return of work from home is poor and this is an area of development for the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44 At the time of the previous inspection a number of weaknesses were identified in the management of the school and its financial planning and control. Good progress has been made on the key issues that resulted from these weaknesses. The headteacher's leadership provides good educational direction for the staff of the school. She has a clear vision of how the school should develop and has developed many strategies to support the school's improvement. Ninety-two per cent of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that the school was well led and managed. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is good and its effectiveness can be seen in the improvement of teaching since the previous inspection and the targeted support that is offered to teachers who require further development. In the last two years the school has seen a number of teachers leave and join the school. A number of supply teachers worked in the school during the last academic year and this had a detrimental effect on the progress made by some pupils. On a positive note, all the staff in the school now fill permanent positions and four new teachers have joined the school at the start of the current academic year. With nearly half of the school teaching staff new, a good monitoring and evaluation programme has been put together for the autumn term to ensure the development of the new teaching team. Although standards are still not high enough they have improved over the last two years and with the new team of teachers in the school, the shared commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed is good.

45 The headteacher is well supported by her deputy head, whose main responsibilities are for special educational needs, inclusion and as a learning mentor. Her monitoring of underachieving pupils and the management of strategies to improve pupils' progress, for example the direction of learning support assistants to targeted pupils, has been crucial in raising standards in the school, particularly last year's Year 2 national test results. There are weaknesses in the management skills of other key

staff and the contribution of those with management responsibilities. The role of the key stage co-ordinators is underdeveloped. Some subjects are managed by inexperienced or new members of staff or by temporary co-ordinators. These subjects are not developing as effectively as they could and some subjects are not monitored rigorously enough. This has resulted in standards not being high enough in some subjects, for example music and geography. This should improve in during the autumn term when subject co-ordinators will be given time away from their classes to audit and monitor their subjects.

46 During the previous inspection the school governors were criticised for being insufficiently involved in strategic planning and not being aware enough of the progress pupils were making or holding the school to account for the standards that it achieved. The governors have developed their role well through in-service training and are now more confident about their duties. They are now effectively involved in shaping the direction of the school and understanding its strengths and weaknesses. They fulfil statutory requirements. Governors have identified that the previous inspection gave them clear guidelines on how to move forward and contribute positively to the school improvement plan. They are able to provide examples challenging the school's practices and understand that there is further work to be done on raising standards. The governing body is well led by the chair of governors, who is passionate about developing the achievements of pupils in the school. She is articulate and contributes well to school development. The governors also made the decision with the headteacher to employ an independent financial adviser who has a good understanding of local education authority financial procedures. This ensures that educational priorities are supported through good financial planning and information. The governors in particular feel they are now well informed about making financial decisions for the future. The school improvement plan is an effective document that clearly identifies the school's priorities in raising standards and the quality of education. Although the plan also identifies strategic developments beyond the current year, these are not linked to the draft three-year financial plan. The principles of best value are applied satisfactorily but the school has not started to analyse the impact of some of their major spending decisions. The school's improvement plan links well with performance management, although with many of the teachers new to the school the development of performance management will have to be re-addressed.

47 Specific grants and additional funds are generally used well by the school as they strive to raise standards and improve the quality of education. This funding has enabled the school to have a non-teaching deputy head who has clearly had some impact on raising standards in the school. Her management of special educational needs is good, and there is effective, caring provision. She has effectively developed procedures for early identification of pupils' needs and works well with class teachers and outside agencies to compile each pupil's individual education plan and is fully involved in reviews and assessing pupils' progress. The ethnic minority achievement grant is appropriately spent to provide good classroom support. However, the school would acknowledge the need to review this provision as the number of pupils with English as an additional language increases in the Foundation Stage. Some of the school's proposed carry-forward during the current financial year has been used to provide extra adult support in classrooms. The carry-forward will be reduced to about five per cent of the school's overall budget by the end of the financial year through allocated spending.

48 The school's policies and practices to promote all aspects of inclusion and equality of opportunity are good. The school's aims recognise the need to abolish inequality of opportunity and meet the needs of individuals, and this aspiration is well reflected in the day-to-day life of the school. The school's good provision for social development contributes well to the full inclusion of all pupils as does the use of outside agencies to support pupils, particularly Afro-Caribbean boys. During the last academic year, gifted mathematicians were provided with an opportunity to study for and sit GCSE mathematics.

49 The school has a good number of teachers and support staff who have a range of experience and expertise. The deputy headteacher provides good support for a newly qualified teacher and meets each week with the learning support assistants to review their work. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, as is the appointment of a support teacher who will relieve class teachers so that they can monitor teaching in their subjects and work with target groups of pupils. There has been a significant turnover of teachers recently and more learning support assistants have been appointed.

Arrangements for introducing them to the school's routines have been good, with a day set aside for this involving local advisory staff as well as teachers from the school. There is a helpful staff handbook. Learning support assistants provide valuable help in classes, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons to support, in particular, lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs enabling them to make sufficient progress.

50 Significant changes have been made to the accommodation since the previous inspection. The reception class has now been moved to a room adjacent to the nursery so that a Foundation Stage Department has been created. This enables staff to work more closely together and to share resources, leading to improved provision for the children. The room vacated by the reception class is to become a resources room to provide an area for activities such as music and drama. The library is housed in a full-sized classroom and is well stocked with books that are systematically catalogued and arranged. Pupils regularly borrow books to take home. However, the room is used for a variety of purposes not connected with a library. It is an untidy area and is not being used regularly enough for the development of pupils' library and research skills.

51 Resources are adequate. No subject is under-resourced though some musical instruments are of poor quality and need replacing. For some subjects, notably literacy, ICT and religious education, resources are good. The computer suite is being used satisfactorily for the development of skills and each classroom now has three other computers to enable the practice of these skills throughout the week when teachers plan for this. Resources for design and technology have improved since the previous inspection and are now adequate. The school continues to provide a good number of visits, including a residential opportunity, that enrich the curriculum and have a positive effect on standards.

52 With rising standards, the improvement in teaching since the previous inspection, pupils' positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour, and leadership that provides clear educational direction, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53 The inspection team recognises the school's drive to raise standards and the quality of education. In addition to the work already undertaken, to further improve the standards achieved and the teaching and learning the headteacher, staff and governors should:

(1) Raise standards in English and mathematics by:

developing literacy and numeracy skills across the whole curriculum;
providing planned opportunities for speaking and listening including drama, extended conversations and debates;
developing the use of the school library;
ensuring that work is effectively planned for different ability groups in numeracy.

(Paragraphs: 3, 4, 5, 16, 18, 18, 22, 40, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88 and 89).

(2) Raise standards in science by:

ensuring that work is planned for different ability groups and extension activities are provided for higher attaining pupils;
developing assessment procedures that can be used to monitor the progress of pupils and plan future work.

(Paragraphs: 3, 4, 5, 16, 18, 19, 22, 40, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88 and 89).

(3) Raise standards in ICT by:

developing teachers' subject knowledge and confidence;
ensuring that work is planned and organised for different ability groups;
producing assessment procedures.

(Paragraphs: 8, 18, 19, 40, 108, 109, 110 and 111).

(4) Improve the management of subjects by:

developing the role of the subject co-ordinator;
introducing assessment procedures to those subjects without them.

(Paragraphs 40, 45, 75, 89, 101, 107, 111, 112, 115, 117 and 121).

(5) Use examples of very good teaching to further improve the quality of teaching across the school.

(Paragraphs: 1, 5, 17, 57, 80 and 87).

In addition to the above, the headteacher, school and governors might like to consider the following minor issue for inclusion in their action plan.

(6) Raise the levels of attendance.

(Paragraphs 13 and 38).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

52

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
Number	1	7	18	25	1	0	0
Percentage	2	13	35	48	2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

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)	20	177
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		112

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		44

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	30

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
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 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	14	10	24

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	10	12
	Girls	8	7	8
	Total	19	17	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 (47)	71 (57)	83 (70)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	9	12
	Girls	8	7	8
	Total	18	16	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (53)	67 (60)	83 (60)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	11	14	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	7	6
	Girls	10	6	10
	Total	15	13	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (63)	52 (53)	64 (47)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	7	7
	Girls	11	9	12
	Total	17	16	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (63)	64 (63)	76 (68)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	60
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	5
Chinese	0
White	28
Any other minority ethnic group	53

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	9	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)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.6
Average class size	25.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	203

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	680239
Total expenditure	631096
Expenditure per pupil	2909
Balance brought forward from previous year	35784
Balance carried forward to next year	84927

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	197
Number of questionnaires returned	37
Percentage of questionnaires returned	19

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	32	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	35	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	43	5	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	35	21	6	3
The teaching is good.	72	28	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	78	19	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	19	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	19	0	0	8
The school works closely with parents.	68	24	5	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	62	30	3	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	29	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	31	11	0	15

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

54 The adults who work with the children in the Foundation Stage have worked hard to develop the provision for these young children since the previous inspection when planning and teaching showed insufficient attention to literacy and numeracy. This is no longer an issue. All children are well supported by the adults who work with them. Adults promote the development of basic literacy and numeracy skills in specially designated role-play areas and in the reading and writing areas. Mathematical skills are similarly promoted in many areas, for example the children develop their counting skills when singing number rhymes.

55 Learning resources are sufficient to promote all areas of learning inside and outside the classroom. Children in both classes use the secure but small, well equipped outdoor area for physical development and for other well-structured activities. This has been developed since the previous inspection. As well as being used for wheeled vehicles, climbing apparatus and small apparatus such as bats, balls and hoops, boards have been attached to the walls for the children to develop their writing and drawing skills. The older children in the reception class have regular opportunities to use the school hall to develop physical skills.

56 At the time of the inspection there were 20 children in the nursery. After they have completed the successfully implemented induction programme the children settle in quickly and attend full time. Most of the children move into the reception class where there are currently 30 children. Attainment on entry to the school is below average, which is similar to the previous inspection. Teachers look carefully at the tests the children complete when they enter the reception class and this information is effectively used to predict National Curriculum levels for the children at the end of Key Stage 1.

57 Teaching varies between the two classes. In the reception class teaching is satisfactory and in the nursery it is good. In the best lessons adults promote speaking skills well. The children are well managed and adults have high expectations regarding listening carefully at all times. All adults interact well within groups and opportunities are not missed as they reinforce skills and vocabulary previously taught. This results in children listening well, concentrating and sitting quietly when appropriate because the adults who work with them expect it. The quality teaching in the nursery encourages good learning and progress during all lessons. Learning is satisfactory in lessons in the reception class and children make appropriate progress. Teachers' planning and day-to-day assessments are satisfactory and used to move children onto the next stages of learning. Two children are identified, as having special educational needs and there are fourteen children who have English as an additional language in the Foundation Stage. This represents about thirty-three per cent in the reception class. These pupils are not always sufficiently supported.

58 The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is closely linked to the nationally recognised early learning goals for children of this age. Profiles, which indicate what each child can achieve, are well developed and show individual progress as the children move through the areas of learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

59 Teaching is satisfactory overall but good in the nursery. In this class, where adults have high expectations regarding the importance of listening carefully this area is well promoted and learning is good within lessons. However in the reception class adults sometimes talk over the noise of the children, questions are often not directed at individuals and this results in children shouting out and language not being developed appropriately. Many children are not developing appropriate listening skills and this hinders their development in this area. Secondly, progress is hindered because many children have limited language skills, which makes it difficult for them to answer questions and express their point of view. Behaviour is good but at times a few children find it difficult to share and get on with each other. By the end of the reception class most children are unlikely to reach the expected levels.

The progress the children make is sound. In both classes the children show positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Personal independence is satisfactorily developed as the children move through the two classes. For example the children in the nursery eat lunch in the main hall. This is a lovely social occasion, which is well managed. There are many opportunities for the children to work in pairs and small groups and begin to develop the skills necessary to work independently. Most children select activities with confidence and even the youngest children are encouraged to tidy away at the end of the session. Planning and photographs show that the children begin to develop a basic understanding of festivals such as Diwali and Christmas.

Communication, language and literacy

60 The quality of teaching of communication, language and literacy skills is sound. It is better in the nursery where speaking and listening skills are consistently well promoted in all activities. Where basic communication skills are well promoted, learning and ultimately progress over time are good. A good example was seen in the nursery during a story session when basic language was well promoted and reinforced as the children learnt to sequence the days of the week and name the colours as they listened to the story. The teacher skilfully questioned the children to reinforce the story. They listened carefully and confidently gave the teacher answers to her questions. In the reception class a significant number of children have English as an additional language which limits the standards they reach by the time they enter Year 1. A few are reluctant to talk and many talk with limited vocabulary. Most are unlikely to reach the expected standards. All demonstrate a sound awareness of what books are for and handle them carefully as they sit and look at them for short periods of time. A good example was seen in the reception class during a registration session as a small group of children eagerly looked for their favourite book, *The Rainbow Fish*. Lower ability and average children look at the pictures and begin to tell the story using odd words or short phrases. The higher attainers recognise the title of the books they read, identify a few initial sounds and begin to learn the names and sounds of some letters and some familiar words. In both classes the children are encouraged to develop early writing skills. They record their ideas and experiences through drawing and writing at a low level. Higher attainers write showing a developing understanding of letters. A few have a confident attempt at writing their names. There are many opportunities to develop writing skills. For example in the reception class they have written letters and then watched a video about what happens to letters after they have been posted.

Mathematical development

61 Teaching is satisfactory and the children have many opportunities to develop mathematical skills in the many activities they are offered. The children enjoy experiences they are given to develop basic number skills. In the nursery children begin to identify and name numbers up to five. As they get older the more able children in the reception class identify numbers up to ten. These children are beginning to develop an understanding of simple addition and subtraction. They use their fingers to solve very simple number problems such as "How many would you have if you had two sweets and I gave you another one?" A few children, in a similar way work out that three minus one equals two. Adults interact well within the groups and give the children many opportunities to articulate their thinking to develop their mathematical understanding. The children begin to develop an understanding of basic mathematical vocabulary such as 'one more than' and 'one less than' as they sing number rhymes. However limited language skills hinders the progress many children make over time. Most children are beginning to identify and name basic shapes such as squares, triangles, rectangles and circles. The children use ICT to support their mathematical learning. For example, in the nursery two children were observed working on the computer. The good quality support they received enabled them to work through the program counting sets of animals successfully. Mathematical vocabulary is systematically taught and in the reception class more able children identify 'tallest' but have difficulty recalling the word 'shortest'. They understand 'fat' but have no idea of 'thin'. Progress is satisfactory but most are unlikely to reach the expected levels by the end of their time in reception.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

62 Teaching is satisfactory and most children make satisfactory progress. Planning clearly shows that during this term the children in the nursery are going to learn to name their body parts. In the reception class they are looking at their local environment in particular the houses they live in. There are sound links with mathematical development as they use basic shapes to make their house. Adults take advantage of opportunities to reinforce ideas taught previously, but because of limited language skills the majority of children are unlikely to reach the expected levels for their ages by the end of the reception class. The children begin to learn about how plants grow as they plant and then watch the changes that occur. They have daily opportunities to do this in the small garden in the outdoor area. Planning shows how they develop an understanding of their own bodies and identify how they have changed since they were babies. The children develop a simple knowledge of events in history as they listen to the story of Guy Fawkes. However limited language hinders progress as was clearly seen when talking to a group of reception children. All had difficulty naming someone who was older than them. Two higher attaining children eventually named their dad and their Grandad as old people. When asked where they live a few children in the reception class name the road in which they live. When prompted with the word 'Birmingham' a few said they lived there. Each classroom has one computer and with support the children develop basic computer skills such as learning how to move the cursor around the screen as they work through basic programs which reinforce their learning in literacy and numeracy.

Physical development

63 Teaching is overall satisfactory. The children in both classes have physical sessions in the outdoor area. There are daily opportunities for safe outdoor play in the secure area designated for the Foundation Stage children. In good lessons, skills and knowledge are taught systematically which results in good learning because instructions are clearly understood and all children are expected to listen. The children use the climbing equipment with enthusiasm and enjoyment. They develop satisfactory body awareness and the majority move with developing confidence and listen well to instructions. The children in reception regularly visit the school hall. In a lesson seen, basic vocabulary was developed well as the teacher gave clear instructions as she asked the children to "Sit inside the hoop". Most children handle scissors, paint brushes and pencils with sound control. All children play imaginatively with construction toys and malleable materials such as Play Doh. Progress in this area is satisfactory and most children are likely to reach standards, which are average by the end of the reception class.

Creative development

64 Most of the children are likely to reach the expected levels when they end their time in reception. The children sing songs with great enjoyment and have opportunities to play percussion instruments. A lovely session was observed in the nursery when children were encouraged to accompany the music, which was playing in the background. The nursery nurse gave good quality support as she extended the children's vocabulary by telling them the names of the instruments they were playing. The majority of children express their own ideas and communicate their feelings through well-organised role-play sessions in areas which have been created in both classrooms for example 'The Post Office' in the reception class. Artwork is created using a sound variety of techniques such as collage, printing, painting and drawing. Past work shows sponge prints were used to make a class caterpillar after listening to the story of *The Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle. Satisfactory quality displays enhance the learning environment inside the classrooms. Teaching is satisfactory overall.

ENGLISH

65 Standards in English are below average but are improving. Standards achieved by 11-year-olds in national tests continue to be below the levels expected for their age, although standards have recently risen and the school exceeded its statutory target for 2001. It is a similar picture for pupils in

Year 2. Although test results rose sharply in 2001, standards achieved by the pupils currently in Year 2 remain below the levels expected for their age.

Speaking and listening

66 A feature of teaching that impedes good learning is the lack of opportunity created by teachers for pupils to develop and practise speaking and listening skills. Little progress has been made since the previous inspection. Many Year 1 and 2 pupils have not learned to take turns and listen to what others have to say, and in order to maintain discipline discussion is often curtailed. By the time they are in Year 6 most pupils have learned to listen passively, and often seem apathetic about their learning.

67 Standards in speaking and listening are below average throughout the school. There is no scheme of work to develop pupils' oral language skills and no assessment. In too many classes teachers ask questions that demand only one-word answers, and it is unusual for pupils to be encouraged to extend their answers and develop their ideas orally. The cumulative result of this poor development of oral skills is that by the time they reach Year 6 pupils seem unwilling, and in many cases unable, to offer opinions or to explore ideas. When pupils in Year 5 were expected to do this, by a teacher new to the school, the pupils were clearly bewildered and many floundered as they searched unsuccessfully for the necessary vocabulary to express their opinions. A very similar situation was observed in a drama lesson with the same class. Their complete lack of prior experience meant that pupils were inhibited and embarrassed when asked to interpret a simple poem, using imagination, and they were very reluctant to voice a personal response. A consequence of this poor development of language skills is that in written work although pupils are able, for example, to use a simple thesaurus their vocabulary is so limited that they are unaware of the appropriateness of words found and many use them indiscriminately.

68 Support for pupils for whom English is an additional language is not effectively targeted or monitored to ensure that these pupils make the progress of which they are capable. Their needs are too often confused with those of pupils who have learning difficulties and the work they are given is therefore not always appropriate.

Reading

69 The effective use of the National Literacy Strategy has a positive effect on reading, so that higher attainers in Year 2 read a range of texts accurately and use contents, indexes and glossaries to research information. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 gain from reading a wider range of information books, poetry and fiction. Higher attainers read fluently and with expression, but average and lower attainers often lack understanding of what they have read and do not pick out important bits of text when explaining the plot or sharing information. The additional support given to pupils in Year 3 who are behind with their reading, and the 'booster groups' that provide an extra push for pupils in Years 5 and 6 are all helping to raise standards. As a result of these initiatives more pupils than ever before are reaching higher levels in tests. Despite the hard work of staff, however, standards in reading remain below average. This is in part because of the poor speaking skills of the pupils, which affect their ability to talk about and fully understand their reading. Many pupils lack confidence and expression when reading aloud. For many older pupils strategies for reading words they are unfamiliar with have not been properly learned because of earlier disruption in their education and even pupils of average ability in Year 6 give up far too readily and do not attempt to 'sound out' words.

70 A strength of the teaching is the good provision made for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers take great pains to spot pupils' difficulties early on and they are given individual help and support. Classroom assistants play an important part in helping pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Their time and talents are put to good use when working with small groups and individuals.

71 One factor that has had a strong influence on raising attainment is that pupils' difficulties with literacy are identified quickly and they are given good support. This helps many of them to catch up with other pupils and prevents them from falling too far behind. Between Years 2 and 6 the number of

pupils who leave or start school is high. This has a considerable effect on the school's results and means that despite much of the teaching in Years 3 to 6 being good, standards are likely to remain low.

72 Teachers take great care within lessons to include all pupils regardless of ability or gender, and the pupils' cultural heritage is reflected in much of the reading material to be found within the classrooms.

Writing

73 Greater attention to writing has helped increase the proportion of pupils in Year 2 who reached a the higher level 3 in National Curriculum tests in 2001. There is, however, no planned use of literacy skills across other subjects of the curriculum and as a result pupils have insufficient opportunity to practise and reinforce their newly acquired skills. Most pupils are emergent writers when they start Year 1 and they make steady progress with handwriting and spelling throughout Year 1 and 2. Higher attainers in Year 2 write sentences that include connectives in their work, although punctuation is unreliable. They have a good stab at spelling difficult words using their knowledge of sounds effectively. Teachers do not consistently emphasise the need for neat handwriting and this affects standards of presentation in several other subjects. By the end of Years 5 and 6 higher attaining pupils write in a good fluent style, though the work of lower attainers often has many crossings out and mistakes and letters are not joined. Higher attainers plan their work with care and then use their planning to paragraph their work. Sentences are well-structured with good use of punctuation. Average and lower attaining pupils in Year 6 lack imaginative use of language in their writing and sentences show a restricted vocabulary.

74 Teaching is never less than satisfactory and there is some high quality teaching in the Year 4 and 5 classes. In reading and writing teachers make good use of assessments and tests to group pupils according to ability and to ensure that work is pitched at the right level. This is a marked improvement since the previous inspection. However, there are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills in other subjects in order that they may consolidate their learning. There is still very little planned use of drama. From some of the past work seen, it is clear that the school has improved the range of opportunities it provides for pupils to produce extended pieces of writing.

75 The library is well-stocked with an appropriate range of fiction and non-fiction reflecting all tastes and cultures. It is, however, cluttered, inaccessible to pupils and consequently under-used. Book loans are much appreciated by pupils who often have little access to books at home but insufficient guidance and advice is offered to pupils in their choice of reading outside school. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to involve parents and pupils much more closely in reading for pleasure and has established early links with the local library. Teachers do not currently use ICT sufficiently to support learning in English, but the school intends to rectify this now that new computers have recently been installed in every classroom. The present co-ordinator is new to her post and has not yet developed an overall awareness of what is happening in English teaching throughout the school. There is a good range of resources to support teaching, and the quality of both fiction and non-fiction materials, including dictionaries, in classrooms is good. These are well organised, allowing pupils easy access to their use. Resources have been well-chosen to reflect the cultural heritage of the pupils and this ensures that all are included effectively in their own learning.

MATHEMATICS

76 Standards are below average through the school. Although standards are not high enough, the results of National Curriculum tests have recently improved. The improvements in both key stages are the result of some good teaching in Years 2 and 6 based on good quality systems that now track the standards that pupils achieve and target help for those whose progress is too slow. In this way the school aims to address the under-achievement of boys or girls or those pupils from particular ethnic

backgrounds. Increased support for teachers in the classroom is also having a positive effect on standards.

77 The National Numeracy Strategy is now well embedded in the school's planning procedures. Teachers state clearly what it is that they want pupils to learn each day and share these learning intentions at the beginning of lessons. This helps pupils to focus on the work and they are able to assess themselves whether they have achieved the learning at the end of the lesson. Teachers start their lessons with appropriate activities that test pupils' mental skills and some classes have additional mental maths sessions that develop these skills further. The best example of good mental maths practice was in a Year 5 lesson. Pupils had to write answers on whiteboards in response to the teacher's questions based on the two times table but posed in a variety of ways – "What is two squared?" "What is double twelve?" The session was brisk and enjoyable and the pupils eagerly displayed their answers and called out "Blankety-blank" if they were correct. Because they were motivated to achieve, they made good strides in their learning.

78 The scrutiny of work from last year for those pupils currently in Year 2 shows that, though presentation is often not as neat as it could be, all aspects of mathematics are suitably covered. There is an adequate amount of work over the year and progress is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to apply what they know to practical situations, for example, continuing a pattern of shapes once they have worked out the sequence or estimating how many cubes would equal the length of a given object. Above average pupils are beginning to understand tens and units and most are secure with numbers to ninety-nine. In the lesson observed in Year 2 however, they are not yet able to represent one hundred and thirty-seven on an abacus with one girl drawing ten dots on the hundreds stick. Similarly a below average boy puts ten dots on the tens line when trying to represent nineteen on his abacus. Average pupils accurately double the numbers below ten and produce a block graph following a traffic survey. Pupils with special educational needs have specific mathematical targets written into their individual educational plans such as 'to count reliably to 20' and they receive good support in class from teaching assistants. Within lessons, they often make good progress because of this support.

79 Year 6 pupils currently display a wide range of attainment. Teachers are much more aware of this than at the time of the previous inspection. Teacher-devised tests are regularly given throughout the year and national tests at the end of each year are analysed to determine the levels that pupils have reached and identify those that need extra help. Targets for improvement are set for groups of pupils and shared with them so that they know what to aim for. This is helping to improve learning and attainment. The scrutiny of work from last year for the current Year 6 pupils reveals that they regularly apply their mathematical knowledge to practical situations, working with timetables and calculating problems involving money. The school has correctly identified that they need to do even more to develop their skills in solving everyday problems. The above average work confidently with addition, subtraction, multiplication and division involving numbers to one thousand and know the properties of a range of three-dimensional shapes. Average pupils know how to collect data, use a tally chart and construct a pictogram or block graph to show results, but in number-work they are still exploring the conventions of setting out calculations on paper. In the Year 6 lesson, for example, some of them inaccurately set out numbers vertically, putting hundreds in the thousands column and subsequently getting the wrong answer. Below average pupils also have difficulty in setting out work systematically and the school has correctly identified this as an area for development. However, with more practical work, such as measuring in centimetres and millimetres, they achieve greater success.

80 Teaching in the school overall is satisfactory but it is good in Years 5 and 6 and very good in the lesson seen in Year 4. In the better lessons, a brisk pace is maintained, particularly in the mental maths session. Teachers explain the work very carefully and engage pupils in explanations to test whether they understand the tasks. This helps to promote speaking skills. A girl in Year 4 clearly explains a method of adding thirty-nine and twenty-eight mentally and the teacher is therefore confident that her group can begin their activity. Other good teachers are quick to assess where there is a lack of understanding. In Year 5, for example, the teacher realises that one of the two methods of setting out multiplication problems that she planned to introduce is too difficult and abandons it until another lesson. She realises this because of her skilful questioning that tests the pupils' powers of explanation

without suggesting the answer. Most teachers have good skills of questioning but not all are able to conduct brisk lessons. This is particularly evident in Years 1 and 2 where teachers still have to stop lessons and spend time ensuring that pupils listen and behave correctly. These teachers, too, are not yet planning work that entirely meets the needs of pupils. They are both new to the school and, at this early stage of term, are still assessing what pupils already understand. In the Year 2 lesson, the expectations for the volume of work are too low and pupils only complete one task when many are capable of more.

81 Work in other lessons sometimes supports the development of numeracy skills. In a Year 4 geography lesson for example, pupils identify features on a map of Birmingham by giving accurate grid references. Opportunities to develop numeracy skills in other subjects are not always identified in teachers' planning. Similarly the benefits of using information and communication technology to support mathematics are not being fully exploited. There are no examples of graphs produced on the computer in pupils' books for example.

82 Support staff are deployed in classes to give effective help to pupils, especially those with special educational needs, enabling them to make good progress. In Year 6, for example, three pupils have their own work and are helped by a support teacher to understand the process of multiplication. Pupils who do not use English as their first language do not receive particular help in mathematics but have sufficient understanding to be able to cope with the work. Teachers are aware of the needs of their pupils and cater for all of them in a satisfactory way. Even in lessons where specific work is not planned for the different ability groups, extension work is available for the above average and support staff are deployed to help the below average. A talented girl in Year 4 is given more challenging work to extend her learning and during the last academic year, gifted mathematicians were provided with an opportunity to study for and sit GCSE mathematics.

83 The subject is well led and there are sufficient resources to deliver the subject effectively. The co-ordinator has attended a five-day training course and monitors the subject by scrutinising planning and the pupils' work in books. Observations of lessons have so far been ad hoc but there are plans to organise this systematically in the near future.

SCIENCE

84 Standards in science are below average at the end of both key stages when pupils are in Years 2 and 6. Although standards are not high enough there has been some improvement since the previous inspection. In Year 2 standards were judged to be well below average during the previous inspection in 1999. Teacher assessments for the subject show a significant improvement in 2000 in the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 2 or above. Although there are currently no national comparisons, the 2001 teacher assessments were slightly below the 2000 results but nowhere near the levels of 1999. The weakness in the 2001 results is that no pupils achieved the higher level 3. The Year 6 2001 results show a significant improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 5 on the previous year; however, the overall percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above is only slightly better than the year of the previous inspection. Pupils' achievements in science have been inconsistent over the last few years. Some of this is the result of weak teaching during previous academic years, the above average percentage of special educational needs pupils in the school and the high pupil mobility in Years 3 to 6. There are other factors. Assessment procedures for science are unsatisfactory and not as rigorous as they are in English and mathematics and insufficient attention is paid to the range of ability found in all classes when work is being planned. Pupils are making satisfactory progress overall but those pupils with special needs do not make the good progress they make in literacy and numeracy because work is not matched rigorously enough to their needs. In some classes higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged. This is reflected in the 2001 teacher assessments in Year 2 where not one pupil achieved the higher level 3. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. This is because standards are improving and the quality of teaching and the pupils' progress has improved overall, although there are still areas for development.

85 Although pupils in Year 2 covered the expected areas of study during Year 1, standards are below average. Pupils have studied the external parts of the body and the senses, the characteristics of different materials and growth and change. However, their depth of study is limited. They are able to identify the effects of exercise by describing the heart becoming 'bumpy' as it gets faster and as we become breathless our 'bellies move up and down quickly' but do not identify that our bodies get warmer or that we start to perspire. In discussion, pupils have heard of magnets but only a few could identify that they attract some metals. Some pupils think that they attract glass and another pupil goes as far as saying that magnets attract 'killer insects'. When confronted with a problem for example, what would happen if a plant was not watered, not all are able to predict what might happen. Even though pupils have recently studied healthy eating it is only the higher attaining pupils who can confidently identify drinks and food that are healthy or unhealthy. Pupils' ability to collect data or use scientific language is underdeveloped. Their presentation skills are poor and they are weak at communicating their findings. Scrutiny of their work last year shows very little difference between the achievements of higher attaining pupils with those who are average or lower attaining. These pupils did have a number of supply teachers while they were in Year 1.

86 About seventy-five per cent of the current Year 6 pupils are likely to achieve the expected levels by the end of the year. The percentage of pupils who will achieve the higher level 5 could well be better than the National Curriculum test results for 2001 but a significant minority will not achieve appropriate standards. Some of these pupils have special educational needs, and limited language skills inhibit the presentation of information and data and their understanding of scientific ideas. Higher attaining and average pupils discuss scientific investigations that they have undertaken related to hot and cold air, sand and soil, flowers and condensation. They talk about their current work where they have investigated whether the brightness of a bulb in an electrical circuit can be altered by the thickness of electrical wire. They design their own investigations, highlight the importance of having a fair test and make sensible predications about what might happen.

87 The quality of teaching during the inspection ranged from very good to satisfactory. When the pupils' previous work is included, the overall judgement for teaching is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when all teaching in Key Stage 1 was judged to be unsatisfactory and no very good teaching was observed. Scrutiny of pupils' work does highlight some areas for development although some of this work would have been managed by temporary or supply teachers who no longer work in the school. Expectations regarding pupils' presentation are not high enough and not all of the work undertaken during the previous academic year has been marked. Work that has been marked does not always follow the school's marking policy and although work is often given supportive comments, insufficient information is provided for the pupils to move on to the next stage of learning. On some occasions all pupils are identified as having achieved the learning objective when they have all completed exactly the same work with no regard to different abilities. Given that there is a range of academic ability in all classes, this must mean that some pupils were undertaking work that was too easy for them. In other lessons, pupils undertake too many non-scientific activities, for example spending too much time colouring diagrams or worksheets. Pupils are encouraged to undertake scientific investigations but too many of these are teacher led and prescriptive and pupils, particularly higher attainers, are not given enough opportunities to plan their own tests. The very good lesson observed during the inspection was in Year 4 where pupils were investigating which materials successfully conduct electricity. The classteacher ensured that pupils of all abilities were sufficiently challenged or supported as they worked with a good range of different materials including, straw, brass screws, aluminium foil and rubbers. The pupils had a very good understanding of what they were expected to do and set about their tasks quietly and enthusiastically as they worked in pairs. Scientific language and investigative methods were emphasised and the pupils learnt very well in the time provided.

88 Although the analysis of pupils' previous work indicates that not enough attention is paid when planning lessons to the different range of abilities that are found in classes, some good examples were observed during the inspection of support for pupils with special educational needs. In a Year 6 lesson, work was clearly planned for different ability groups and the classteacher provided good support to lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. In Year 2 science, two classroom support assistants gave good assistance to pupils who required help. However, higher attaining pupils

in both of these lessons could have had more challenging activities or been provided with extension activities. The Year 6 lesson was also too long for some of the pupils.

89 The subject is managed satisfactorily by the headteacher who is filling in because of the recent high staff turnover. She does have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The subject is clearly identified in the school improvement plan in terms of raising standards and reviewing the use of the national scheme of work and how it applies specifically to the school and the needs of the pupils. These targets are appropriate given where the school is, but assessment procedures are too informal and do not have the impact that they should have in terms of monitoring pupils' progress and influencing future planning. Literacy and numeracy skills are not well promoted nor is their development identified in teachers' planning. Better use could be made of ICT to support the subject. Resources are satisfactory.

ART AND DESIGN

90 Pupils' attainment at the ages of seven and eleven is below that expected nationally. The previous inspection reported that the children made sound progress in Years 3 to 6 and inconsistent progress through Years 1 and 2. Currently, the progress pupils have made by the age of eleven has dropped and it has not improved by the age of seven. All pupils make unsatisfactory progress. There are a number of reasons for this. Past planning shows that although lessons had been planned in each year group, learning objectives were not always clearly identified and lessons were not consistently evaluated. The quality of planning has now improved although the evaluation of lessons continues to be an issue. There has been a high turnover of staff and many classes have been taught by a number of supply teachers. This has resulted in the teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding in art not being progressively developed. This continues to be an issue from the previous report. Examples of work in each year group show that drawing and painting skills have not been developed systematically as pupils move through the school. For example there is little difference in the portraits drawn by Years 1, 2 and 3 pupils and this work shows a limited use of materials.

91 Displays and sketchbooks clearly demonstrate that pupils have had too few experiences in developing skills, knowledge and understanding, as did the discussion with pupils in Years 6. Pupils talk in a limited way when referring to famous pieces of art or the names of artists. For example most pupils just know one artist and one famous painting, Vincent Van Gogh and *Sunflowers*. Links with other areas such as history are evident as they talk about how they developed an idea of three-dimensional art when they made a mummy from plasticene in Year 4. Others spoke of painting letters for a poster for an assembly. Discussions and looking at past work show they have used a limited range of materials in all year groups.

92 No teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2 and there is too little evidence to make an overall judgement about teaching. However in the two lessons observed teaching was good and satisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when some teaching was unsatisfactory. In the better lesson in Year 5, the teacher demonstrated high expectations regarding acceptable behaviour and effectively managed the pupils who displayed challenging behaviour by immediately addressing low level disruption. All instructions were clear and skills were taught progressively. This was clearly shown as she used assessment information from the previous lesson to develop pupils' skills and knowledge in understanding what the primary colours were. Most pupils demonstrated positive attitudes to the activities and listened well, which resulted in good learning during the lesson.

93 The talented, newly appointed co-ordinator has quickly assessed what is needed to develop the subject and raise standards further. She is aware of the necessity to introduce and monitor the teaching of a clear scheme of work, based on the new national guidelines. This will result in the progressive teaching of skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject. She has identified the need to develop resources and link these in with the new scheme of work and introduce assessment procedures. ICT is beginning to support the subject but this is not consistent throughout the school. A good example was seen in Year 3 when pupils used a program to create repeating patterns. There is little evidence of the subject promoting pupils' cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94 By the ages of seven and eleven pupils' attainment is below that expected nationally. All pupils make unsatisfactory progress. These findings reflect those reported during the previous inspection and there are a number of reasons for this. Discussion with pupils in Year 6, indicates that as they have moved through the school they have received too few experiences to develop their skills and knowledge in design and technology. Pupils have used a limited range of tools and materials. For example in Year 5 they talk about using 'plastic strips which popped together to make a car'. Others talk about sewing materials to make a class 'wall-hanging'. All agreed that they have never actually used a saw but have used wood, which the teacher cut for them. A few say they once used a plastic toy hammer. Secondly there has been a high turnover of staff and many classes have been taught by a number of supply teachers. Some lessons, which were planned for, were not taught in enough depth. Some were not taught at all. Planning of lessons is currently satisfactory although planning from the previous academic year shows that although lessons had been planned for in each year group, learning objectives were not always clearly identified and lessons were not consistently evaluated. Although the quality of planning has now improved the evaluation of lessons is unsatisfactory.

95 There were few examples of past work to look at. There is no evidence to indicate that ICT is used to support the subject. Pupils in Year 2 have previously made puppets using card and split pins to enable parts to move. There was little evidence of designing in this activity. When talking to pupils in Year 2 they could not identify what they had previously made in any design and technology lessons. In Year 3, pupils had designed sandwiches and developed labelled diagrams. However this work contained no real evaluative comments and showed too little awareness of the promotion of writing skills. The standard of this work was below what would be expected for pupils of this age.

96 Teaching and learning prior to the current academic year has been unsatisfactory. However in the two lessons observed teaching was satisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when some teaching was unsatisfactory. With effective teaching Year 6 boys and girls work well together in mixed groups as they decide which materials will be suitable to use when they eventually make their shelters. Lower ability pupils were well supported in one lesson as the classroom assistant acted as a scribe. This enabled learning to be sound for all pupils during the lesson. There were weaknesses in the Year 2 lesson despite there being four adults in the room. The teacher had too low expectations regarding the pupils' behaviour and allowed them to mutter consistently whilst she was speaking. Before they moved to their activity she did not calm them down which resulted in them moving very noisily to their tables.

97 The school is in its second year of using the new national guidelines to plan lessons. As he reviews these new guidelines, the co-ordinator is aware of the necessity to develop resources and the monitoring and assessment procedures in order to ensure the progressive teaching of skills. The subject is managed satisfactorily.

GEOGRAPHY

98 Pupils' attainment at the ages of seven and eleven is below that expected nationally. All pupils make unsatisfactory progress. These findings reflect those reported in the previous inspection. Past work in all year groups clearly shows that although topics have been planned for, teaching has not been in sufficient depth and the number of recorded pieces of work are limited. For example the previous Year 6 class, completed approximately six pieces of work. The work produced was untidily presented and the marking did not tell the pupils what they needed to do in order to improve. Lower ability pupils sometimes produced better pieces of work than the average or above average pupil in the class. There has been an improvement during the current academic year in the quality of teachers' planning although there is a lack of lesson evaluation. Another factor for these low standards is the high turnover of staff and the fact that many classes have been taught by a number of supply teachers and geography has not been a priority subject. This has resulted in pupils having too few experiences

in developing geographical skills, knowledge and understanding, For example when Year 6 pupils studied the rainforests last year the completed work was represented by a world map with the rainforests coloured in. This is unsatisfactory.

99 Pupils talk in a very limited and muddled way about geographical facts and what geography is. One girl in Year 6 thought it was when they learnt about the Victorians whilst another said it was when they looked at the area around the school. They talked about going on a trip to a village and in a limited way they compare a village to a town. For example, 'villages are smaller and there are fewer factories in villages than towns'. The pupils in Year 6 are confused between towns and countries and list London and Wales as towns. All know that the country we live in is called England but do not appreciate the differences between continents, cities and capitals. For example one pupil said that 'the continent of Birmingham is London'. When asked about what they did when they studied the rainforest they said that they painted animals such as monkeys and birds and made a jungle picture. No one could identify where the rainforests are or remember colouring them in on a world map. Pupils in Year 2 spoke in a limited way about their ideas of what a map is. They are currently looking at life on an island but no one could say what an island is despite having recently painted pictures of islands and having a large picture of one on their classroom wall.

100 In the two lessons seen one was judged to be very good and the other one satisfactory. There is too little evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching. However in the better lesson in Year 4, the teacher used resources well and there were good opportunities given for the pupils to develop research skills. There were good opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills as they talked about buildings in the city centre. The pupils demonstrated very positive attitudes to the lesson and listened well, which resulted in good learning during the lesson. A good quality display of aerial photographs enhanced the lesson.

101 Because of the past staffing difficulties there is no co-ordinator for the subject. However the head is aware of the necessity to appoint a co-ordinator and ensure that the current guidelines, which are based on the school's own scheme and the new national guidelines are reviewed. She has identified the need to develop resources and link these with the new scheme of work and introduce assessment procedures. There is little evidence to show that ICT is used to support the subject or that geography lessons promote pupils' cultural development adequately.

HISTORY

102 Attainment in history is typical of that expected of seven and eleven-year-olds. This means that standards have improved since the previous inspection. An improved programme for teaching enables teachers to take pupils through interesting and challenging work. This allows all pupils to make satisfactory progress so that by the time they leave school, most pupils have a sound understanding of the periods and people they study. They know about periods of history from ancient times to the recent past including the Ancient Egyptians, Tudor England and the Second World War.

103 By the time they are seven, pupils begin to understand about the passage of time as they use objects and facts about children in Victorian times as an introduction to the past. Teachers choose topics that are interesting to pupils and ensure that there is a wide range of resources available to them. A good example of this is the way pupils in Year 1, as part of their 'Toys Old and New' topic, enjoyed playing with toys from another era and comparing them with their own.

104 In Years 1 and 2, teaching is sound overall, and the teacher's high expectations in Year 2 last year of what pupils could achieve led to good learning. After looking at photographs about the life and bravery of Florence Nightingale, the pupils put a number of picture cards in the correct order to retell the story. They learn about chronology through a simple use of time lines and note the year of their own birth alongside that of their teacher and famous people from the past.

105 Teachers use their good knowledge of history to enable pupils to focus clearly on the events or circumstances that brought about changes. For example, pupils in Year 6 wrote about how the

Industrial Revolution affected the lives of many Victorians as they moved from the country to work in the grim conditions of the factories. A further strength of teaching is the way in which teachers develop pupils' skills of empathy. Pupils in Year 6 investigate events post-1950 and learn about John Lennon, Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights Movement in the USA.

106 Teachers enrich pupils' understanding of the reality of the past by visits to museums and historic buildings. Pupils in Year 5 visit Selly Manor where they experience for themselves the everyday life of a servant in Victorian times. Pupils in Year 6 add to their knowledge about life in Victorian times through an exploration of the locality and a study of the census statistics for the area and the gravestones in the local cemetery.

107 Resources for learning are sound and the school has an appropriate range of artefacts. A start has been made on monitoring teachers' planning although the school is currently without a permanent co-ordinator for the subject. An improved scheme of work places the school in a sound position to be able to raise standards. The use of ICT is underdeveloped.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

108 Standards in ICT are below those normally found in Year 2 and Year 6. A number of pupils in Year 2 have levels of attainment that are well below that expected. This is a similar picture to the previous inspection except that the school has improved the resources for the subject and that there is a good ICT action plan in place for the autumn term. The school is well placed to continue the development of ICT through the school. Although pupils' achievements are currently satisfactory, discussions with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 indicate that progress in previous years has not been consistent as a result of weaknesses in teaching.

109 Pupils in Year 2 use the computer to explore the differences between handwritten and word-processed texts. Many of them require adult support when starting their work and show keyboard skills that are underdeveloped. Not all are able to save their work independently. When talking to the pupils about their work in Year 1, they identify word processing as the only work they undertook with computers. They talked about different font sizes, colours and style. Their discussions about the use of ICT inside and outside school are extremely limited. They show no understanding of simple programming or using ICT to organise or present information, for example using data to produce a graph. Pupils in Year 6 showed levels of attainment nearer those expected for their age. They have all used the Internet and have researched information for example in links with history about the Victorians. The pupils discussed controlling a programmable toy in Year 5 and talked confidently about how computers are used outside school in banks, libraries and supermarkets. Year 6 pupils have had a range of word processing experiences and have designed posters combining graphics and text. However, pupils have not used e-mail or other ICT equipment such as digital cameras.

110 Teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. However, the quality of teaching is not helped by timetabled lessons in the school's computer suite that are too short. These provide insufficient time for lessons to develop effectively and for pupils to spend quality time working with their computers. This is particularly important, as a significant number of pupils do not have access to machines outside school. Not all of the teachers are confident in ICT and there are weaknesses in their subject knowledge. Too many lessons are planned with all pupils covering the same work and at the same level. This means that higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged and those pupils who are less confident or experienced find the work too difficult. In a good Year 5 lesson numeracy skills were reinforced well as pupils used spreadsheets to check their mental maths. The lesson had pace and was well organised; learning was good. Language associated with the subject, like 'icons' and 'desktop', were constantly reinforced and, although all of the pupils were working at the same task the class teacher and her support assistants ensured that all maintained their effort and concentration. They were also there to provide good quality support. In some lessons observed insufficient attention was paid to what was exactly happening as the pupils worked together. In these classes too many pupils dominated the computers at the expense of their partners.

111 The subject is managed by a new co-ordinator who has only held the post since the beginning of the current term. She is keen and enthusiastic and is initially being supported by the headteacher. A good programme of support is in place to develop the new co-ordinator and provide professional development for all teachers in the school. Much of this will be provided by the local education authority support team, and is funded by grants specifically for this purpose. Resources in the school are good and in addition to the computer suite each class has three computers. However during the inspection there was very little evidence of ICT being used to support other subjects. There are no formal assessment procedures in ICT and this is unsatisfactory. In one lesson observation during the inspection the classteacher had to ask pupils what they had experienced previously rather than being able to refer to records of pupils' achievements. Although the school has adopted the national guidelines to ensure the subject develops progressively through the school the units of work are not always appropriate to the current attainment of the pupils in the school.

MUSIC

112 Music during this inspection was largely confined to those days in the week when inspectors were not present and very little direct evidence was available on which to base judgements about standards and progress. These were respectively judged to be 'similar to those found in other schools' and 'satisfactory' at the previous inspection. Provision for music is now unsatisfactory. There is no one with responsibility for managing the subject, though there are plans to remedy this in the near future. Class lessons are not regularly delivered and pupils have scanty knowledge and recall of past work. The nationally recommended programme of work provides a sound framework within which teachers can plan their lessons but it has not yet been evaluated to meet the specific needs of the school.

113 A pianist comes into school each Friday and year-groups join together to sing songs. Pupils in Year 2, however, cannot quote the songs they know nor can those in Year 6, although they say that some of the songs are from other countries. In the assemblies that were observed during the inspection, there was singing in only one when pupils made a valiant effort to sing the school song unaccompanied. They displayed reasonable enthusiasm and tunefulness and an ability to sing the words clearly. The lack of singing in assembly has not altered since the previous inspection. There is a small choir that sometimes performs in assemblies and at events outside school but they did not perform for the inspectors. There is no instrumental tuition and the recorder group mentioned in the last report no longer exists. ICT is not used to support work in music.

114 Because only two lessons could be seen, pupils were interviewed about music. Year 2 pupils could not name a famous composer nor could they identify common musical instruments. Pupils in Year 6 gave several examples of instruments such as maracas and drums but did not know that they were from the 'percussion family'. They could define 'pitch' and 'rhythm' but had no idea about 'dynamics' in music. They enthusiastically recalled a composing activity when they wrote the words and tune for a 'Dragon Song' and added an instrumental accompaniment. Without a recording of these compositions, however, it is impossible to judge standards. The conversations with pupils indicate that standards are below those found in most schools and that progress is unsatisfactory.

115 All the pupils confirmed that they did not have regular, weekly class lessons last year. The older pupils contrasted this with the position when they were in Year 4, when they had regular lessons chiefly because there was a co-ordinator for the subject. A review of teachers' half-termly plans for last year confirms this intermittent delivery of lessons. In the autumn term, for example, of six lessons planned for Year 3, four were not carried out for various reasons. This planning also reveals failures to state clearly what pupils were expected to learn in the lessons. Statements such as 'to focus the listening skills of pupils' and 'to explore musical patterns' are too broad and make it difficult for teachers to assess specifically what pupils have learned at the end of the lesson.

116 Teaching in the two lessons seen was satisfactory. Year 1 pupils sang in a lively fashion adding appropriate actions to the song *Tommy Thumb* and the teacher then presented a challenging task by attempting to get pupils to sing *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star* as a round in two parts. Pupils needed help from the teacher and the classroom assistant to attempt this and, out of four attempts, one was

successful and they were suitably praised. In the other lesson, pupils in Year 3 made intelligent guesses as to which animal was represented in two extracts from *The Carnival of the Animals*. They reacted appropriately to the plodding music for the elephant and the gentle swan music and were engrossed as the teacher played the melody for the swan on her cello. There is therefore an obvious interest in the subject.

117 Instrumental resources have deteriorated in quality since the previous inspection. Some instruments on the music trolleys look old and a few are broken. There are sufficient resources however to deliver the curriculum. The school plans to make the room recently vacated by the reception class into a music room and this will have advantages. Aspects of music are not being taught regularly nor is the subject effectively monitored.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

118 Standards in physical education are similar to those found nationally in Year 2 and Year 6. This is a similar picture to the previous inspection although discussions with Year 6 pupils indicate that standards in swimming have improved, with the majority of pupils now being able to swim the nationally recommended distances by the time they leave the school. A minority of pupils exceed these distances quite significantly. However, it is unsatisfactory that the school has no record of its pupils' achievements in swimming given that the teaching of swimming is a statutory requirement in Years 3 to 6. All pupils are making satisfactory progress through the school.

119 No teaching was observed in Year 2 or 6. Year 2 pupils were able to talk about the effects of exercise and its contribution to keeping healthy. The pupils explained how they could improve their running and jumping and the best way to pass a ball. Year 6 pupils identified the importance of warming up before exercise and the necessity to cool down afterwards. They explained the basic principles of safety and discussed how their ball skills had improved playing games such as rounders. Pupils stressed the need for tactics to win games and described accurately some of the activities they had undertaken in gymnastics.

120 Teaching is satisfactory through the school. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 2. During the current inspection Year 1 pupils were observed linking body movements to the beat of a drum and tambourine. Some of the pupils were able to make good judgements and observations about the performances of others. A good example of this was at the start of the lesson when most pupils were finding the challenge of the lesson too demanding until the classteacher asked one pupil to demonstrate her movements. The rest of the class sat transfixed as she moved around the hall to the beat of a drum. All pupils then proceeded to develop their own successful sequences. Some of the teaching observed was good or better. A very good Year 5 dance lesson was inspired by the classteacher's own participation. Her very high standards encouraged pupils to work in pairs and develop their own dance sequences and then evaluate their performances thoroughly so that they could be improved. Learning in this lesson was very effective. Lessons follow an appropriate structure that provides time for pupils to warm up properly, undertake the main activity and then cool down. This was a strong feature of a Year 4 dance lesson, as were the time limits placed on pupils to complete tasks. This ensured good pace to the lesson and good learning. Pupils developed their physical education skills well. However, some physical education lessons are too short and provide insufficient time for teachers to teach effectively and for pupils to learn new skills and understanding.

121 The subject is being led temporarily by the deputy headteacher who has limited experience of the subject. She is 'caretaking' the subject until a new co-ordinator has been appointed. Not all staff are as confident as they should be with the subject and this reflects the lack of recent staff training and professional development. The school follows the national guidelines for the subject and the class timetables and teachers' planning indicate that in principle there is appropriate coverage. Opportunities for swimming are good. Although physical education is not part of the school improvement plan it will be covered in the overall curriculum evaluation that is being undertaken in the school during the autumn term. There are no assessment procedures in place. Resources for the subject are satisfactory

overall although equipment for games activities good be better. The school has a good sized hall for gymnastics and indoor games but more space could be provided if chairs and other equipment were tidied away more effectively.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

122 The standards achieved by seven and eleven-year-olds are now similar to those found in other schools that plan their work from the locally agreed programme. Since the previous inspection, standards have therefore improved for the younger pupils and been maintained for those in Year 6. The pupils achieve satisfactorily in the subject.

123 Last year's work for the current Year 2 pupils shows that they looked at special journeys and, in particular, why Muslims journey to Mecca. They know the events of Easter. In conversation with them, pupils reveal a good understanding of the other events of Jesus' life, particularly his birth and the miracles that he performed. They are currently studying different marriage traditions and the significance of a wedding ring to Christians. Since they joined the school they have made satisfactory progress, mainly by learning stories from different religions such as Noah, Rama and Sita, and those that Jesus told.

124 Last year's work for the current Year 6 pupils shows that they acquired satisfactory knowledge of religious beliefs and practices answering the question "Who was Jesus?" for example, or learning about the Sikh traditions of worship. Pupils learn from religions that people's ways of living are often centred around their beliefs. In this context, they consider what 'commitment' means and explore why some people like St Stephen have been prepared to die for their beliefs. These twin themes, knowledge of religion and understanding its impact, are satisfactorily developed in the Years 3 to 6. Year 3 pupils, for example, have considered what it means to be a Muslim. Year 4 pupils have studied Christian festivals and those from other faiths and those in Year 5 have studied Jesus' qualities, his powers of leadership and how people of the time regarded him. Progress is therefore satisfactory and pupils are presented with a wide range of material.

125 Learning is inhibited to a certain extent by uncertainty over the specific beliefs and traditions of the different religions that are studied. Year 6 pupils have a clear understanding of Christianity but confusion comes when they try to explain the traditions, beliefs and values of the other world faiths, giving inaccurate information, for example about the places of worship or the holy books. Year 6 pupils say that they become confused when they study aspects of various religions as part of an over-arching theme such as 'Signs and Symbols', for example. This confusion is the reason they give for not always entirely enjoying lessons. However, in the lessons seen, pupils respond positively. Year 2 pupils are particularly interested in talking about weddings because they are real to them, all have attended one, and they enthusiastically discuss the reasons why people get married. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall.

126 One of the four lessons seen was unsatisfactory because the previous lesson overran, leaving too little time to develop the theme that there are many ways of praising God. The pupils, too, were restless and the teacher had difficulty controlling them. Time was lost because of this. Two further lessons were satisfactory and one was judged good, characterised by effective use of a video to introduce a discussion of what Jesus was like. In this lesson, the teacher persevered with the discussion even though pupils' speaking skills were not well developed and they found it difficult to speak in sentences or express their thoughts. Eventually she achieved success by linking the quotation 'Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted' to the recent terrorist attack in New York. Pupils immediately associated the ancient words with a modern event and reflected on them. This was a spiritual moment. A similar insight was picked out by the teacher in Year 6 at the end of his lesson. One girl had written in her letter recounting the events of St Stephen's death – 'Stephen had a brave heart and soul'. Again there was a moment of quiet as pupils thought about this.

127 Religious education therefore makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. It also makes a satisfactory contribution to the development of literacy skills, necessary because the lack of

these skills, particularly when speaking, is inhibiting some pupils. Those with special educational needs often struggle to cope with written work. However, they are usually well supported by classroom assistants who enable them to make satisfactory progress. In Year 6, for example, the learning support assistant helped one pupil in particular to write the sentences about St Stephen. All pupils are fully included in the work.

128 The co-ordinator is a very good leader who has compiled a comprehensive programme of work that enables teachers to plan effectively. He thoroughly scrutinises planning and pupils' work in books and is exploring ways in which work can be more systematically recorded to show evidence of what has been covered. He is aware that ICT is not used yet to support religious education and that there is no system by which individual pupils' attainment and progress is assessed. Teachers have access to a good number of books, posters and religious objects to support their lessons. The curriculum is enriched by an exciting development, the 'Inter-Faith Arts' project, that the co-ordinator has been instrumental in setting up. This provides opportunities for pupils to visit the local Christian church, the Jewish synagogue and the Buddhist pagoda to experience workshops and develop an understanding of and respect for the different faiths. This contributes significantly to pupils' cultural development.