

INSPECTION REPORT

BROCKMOOR PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brierley Hill, West Midlands

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103777

Headteacher: Mr P. Lowe

Reporting inspector: Mr M. A. Mackay
23112

Dates of inspection: 10th September –13th September 2001

Inspection number: 218505

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: 3-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Belle Isle
Brockmoor
Brierley Hill
West Midlands

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr H. Friesner

Date of previous inspection: 8th November 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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23112	M A. Mackay	Registered inspector	English Physical Education English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils achievements How well the pupils are taught How well is the school led and managed? What the school should do to improve further
9884	M Roscoe	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
31615	E. M. Radley	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Religious Education	
17686	G. Simpson	Team inspector	Design and technology Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?
18331	J. R. Suttcliffe	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology History Equal Opportunities	
22396	J. E. Young	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art Special Educational Needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Brockmoor is a larger than the average community school for primary age pupils. It has 381 full-time pupils and sixty children who attend the nursery part time. The attainment of the pupils admitted to the nursery is very poor, and the attainment of the pupils beginning full-time education is well below average. Nearly a quarter of the pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. This is above average. By far the largest ethnic group has its origins in Pakistan. Eighty-two of the pupils are learning English as an additional language; thirty-four of these are at an early stage of becoming bilingual. Just over a quarter of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. One pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Need. Just under a quarter of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is slightly above average. The school benefits financially, and in other ways, from being part of a local Education Action Zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has a well-planned curriculum. It has recently improved the quality of its teaching and invested wisely in extra resources, including more learning assistants, to provide valuable extra help to class teachers. The leadership is satisfactory and the school is well managed. It is, therefore, orderly and purposeful. Although standards are below average, they are beginning to rise because the teaching has improved and because the school has begun to reap the benefits of participating in the Education Action Zone. The impact of these improvements, however, is too recent to be seen in significantly better test results. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The children in the nursery make rapid progress because the teaching is consistently good and often better;
- The teaching in English, art, history, music and physical education is often good or better;
- The pupils with special educational needs make good progress, particularly in the Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1;
- The pupils learning to be bilingual make rapid progress so that by the time they enter Key Stage 2, they perform at least as well as the other pupils;
- The school has good resources and uses them well, particularly in English and information and communication technology;
- The school makes good provision for the pupils' moral and social development and prepares the pupils well for citizenship;
- The school works well with partner institutions such as the local beacon schools.

What could be improved

- The pupils' attainment in English and mathematics;
- The expectations some teachers have of what the pupils can achieve,
- The pupils' rates of attendance.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1999. Since then it has made satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues in the report, and it has largely overcome the serious weaknesses identified in it. The school has significantly improved the quality of its teaching. It has taken advantage of its membership of the local Education Action Zone to improve resources and provide extra assistants to support learning. The school has been particularly successful in raising standards in information and communication technology, science and religious education across the year groups and in English and mathematics at Key Stage 1. It has managed modest improvements in English at Key Stage 2, but is yet to do the same in mathematics. The work the teachers do is now carefully monitored and the outcomes used to meet their training needs. The school carefully analyses test results to help it improve the support it gives to pupils. It has successfully helped the older pupils to achieve greater independence in their learning by teaching them how to plan investigations and how to use information

books more effectively. It has not made sufficient progress, however, in raising some teachers' expectations of what the pupils can achieve. It has successfully introduced lessons in personal, health and social development, but it has not succeeded in raising the level of attendance despite some good practice.

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	E*	E*	E*	E
mathematics	E	E	E	D
Science	E*	E	E	D

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

The pattern of attainment in the national tests at Key Stage 2 has changed little until recently. In the 2000 tests at Key Stage 2, standards in mathematics and science were well below the average for all schools and below average for similar schools. In the English tests, the school's performance was in the lowest five per cent, both nationally and in relation to similar schools. However, the school's analysis of the raw data from the most recent tests shows a modest improvement. Of the pupils who reached Level 3, significantly more of them are within a few points of reaching Level 4, the expected level for pupils at the end of Year 6, than was the case in previous years. The school's data also shows that most of the pupils make more than the twelve points progress expected of pupils during Key Stage 2. Moreover, the school exceeded the targets for improvement that it agreed with the local authority. In the work seen during the inspection, standards in English and science were better than those in previous years. In science, for example, the pupils reach the standard expected of pupils in Years 2 and 6. The standard of work in English and mathematics has also improved, though this has not yet been translated into more pupils attaining Level 4. What the pupils achieve at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory given their prior attainment, but the school now has the capacity to ensure that the pupils do even better. This is reflected in the steadily rising number of higher attaining pupils who are reaching above average standards in the national tests. It is also reflected in the significantly improved standards attained in the national tests at Key Stage 1.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Most pupils are interested in their lessons and other activities
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most of the pupils behave sensibly, particularly during lessons and in assemblies.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The pupils form positive relationships with adults and with their peers. They willingly accept responsibility for routine tasks.
Attendance	Poor. The pupils' attendance is well below that of most schools

Most pupils are attentive and well behaved in lessons, but a few make little or no contribution to class discussions, and expect the teachers to do most of the work. Most of the pupils have a good understanding of the impact their actions have on others. A few pupils are frequently absent from school; slightly more arrive late for lessons. This reduces the time for teaching and sometimes interrupts it.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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 teaching of English, including literacy skills, is good overall. The teachers are thoroughly familiar with the Framework for literacy. They plan interesting lessons and make good use of the available resources. They are good at sharing the learning objectives and at helping the pupils to review their work. The teaching of mathematics, including numeracy skills, is satisfactory overall, but ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. The teachers make good use of resources, but sometimes the teaching lacks pace and does not sufficiently challenge the pupils. The strengths common to much of the teaching include: good relationships with the pupils and high expectations of their behaviour, effective use of learning resources, and skilful use of discussion and question sessions. The main weaknesses in the teaching are the lack of pace in some lessons and some teachers' low expectations of what the pupils can achieve. In those lessons, the teachers provided too much support for the pupils and did not make them sufficiently aware of what was expected of them at the next stage of their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and sufficiently balanced to provide for the pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. For the most part, the school provides work that is well matched to the needs of the pupils who have special educational needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The school provides a good start for the pupils who are learning to be bilingual and ensures that the pupils have full access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. The school makes good provision for the pupils' moral and social development, and satisfactory provision for their cultural development. The school provides too few opportunities for the pupils to reflect upon the spiritual dimension to their lives.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. There are good procedures for ensuring the pupils' welfare and for eliminating oppressive behaviour, but not for securing good attendance.

The school's partnership with parents is good. It provides good opportunities for parents to share in the life and work of the school, and it has used its participation in the local Education Action Zone to extend them. The curriculum meets requirements. Some aspects of it are good. For example, information and communication technology is used well to support the pupils' learning. The procedures for child protection are good, but those for promoting regular attendance do not work well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The headteacher and senior teachers ensure that the daily life of the school is orderly and that teachers and pupils are well supported. They provide a clear sense of purpose to the development of the school, but they have yet to establish an ethos in which pupils are consistently expected to strive for high academic standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors fulfil their statutory duties and play a useful role in shaping the direction of school, but they do not have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school makes good use of performance data to help it respond positively to the needs of different groups of pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school uses its core budget well, and has begun to make effective use of the extra resources made available through the Education Action Zone.

The school has sufficient teachers who are supported by a generous number of support assistants. The school's resources are good and used effectively to support learning. The accommodation is very good.

The main strengths of the leadership include: its success in establishing an orderly and secure learning environment, its success in raising significantly the quality of the teaching, and its success in maintaining good morale among the teachers and other staff following its designation as a school with serious weaknesses. As a result, the school has overcome many of its problems. It has, for example, responded well to the key issues of the last report and is moving forward at a faster pace. Some weaknesses remain. In particular, the school has not been wholly successful in establishing an ethos in which all of the teachers and pupils have high enough expectations of what can be achieved. The school has satisfactory arrangements for applying the principles of best value. It makes well-informed decisions about the money it spends, and it looks closely at how its pupils perform in comparison with pupils in similar schools.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem • The school expects their child to work hard and achieve his or her best • The school is well led and managed • The teaching is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities provided outside normal lessons • The amount of work their child gets to do at home • The way the school keeps parents informed about how their child is getting on • The closeness with which the school works with parents

The inspectors endorse the parents' positive views on the quality of teaching and on the school's response to enquiries from parents. They do not agree that the school's provision of activities outside school is unsatisfactory, but they concede that the school could do more to inform parents of what is available. The homework set is similar to that of other schools. The school has satisfactory ways of keeping parents informed about their children's progress. The inspection judgements are that the leadership is satisfactory and the school well managed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment of most of the children who enter the nursery class at the age of three is well below the expected level. Many of the children's language and social skills are poorly developed. A significant proportion of the children are at a very early stage in learning to be bilingual. The children make good progress in the nursery and satisfactory progress in the reception classes in language, literacy and mathematics, but they are unlikely to reach the early learning goals for those areas by the time they start Year 1. They make very good progress, however, in personal and social development and good progress in knowledge and understanding of the world, and in physical and creative development. They are likely to attain the early learning goals for those areas. The children make rapid progress in the nursery and achieve well because the teaching is consistently good or better, and the learning activities are well planned and relevant to their needs. Although the children make satisfactory progress in the reception classes, it is slower than in the nursery because the work is not so consistently well matched to their needs. In a few lessons, for example, the teaching did not sufficiently challenge the higher attaining children.

2. The inspection evidence indicates significantly rising standards at Key Stage 1, largely as a result of improvements to the teaching, particularly in English and science. The improvements are reflected in the most recent national test results and in the pupils' current work. In reading, writing and mathematics, for example, the standards are only a little below what is expected nationally, and the pupils are achieving well. The school has been particularly effective in implementing the Framework for literacy. As a result, the standard of writing is higher now than it was, and the teachers are more effective in helping the pupils make good progress in word-level and sentence-level work. In science, the pupils' higher levels of attainment have come about as a result of better teaching and an improved set of learning opportunities that give pupils more practical experience of investigative, science-based activities. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 are only a little below national expectations, and are improving.

3. The standard of work seen in art, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education, religious education and personal, health and social education at Key Stage 1 is close to what is expected of pupils in Year 2. The teaching in many of the lessons is often good or better. This helps the pupils to achieve well in relation to their prior levels of attainment. However, more pupils could attain higher standards if their teachers' expectations of them were higher and the learning tasks were more challenging. Although the pupils make some progress in geography and design and technology, their attainment remains below that expected for their age in those subjects. This is mainly because the teaching, though satisfactory overall, is not consistent. In some design and technology lessons, for example, the teachers did not provide the pupils with sufficient opportunity to investigate for themselves how products are constructed and used. The teaching in geography lessons, though satisfactory overall, does not cover some aspects of the curriculum in sufficient depth.

4. In Year 6, the standards seen in English are below average but have improved since the last inspection. Those in mathematics remain well below average, whilst standards in science

have improved significantly and are now close to the level expected of pupils aged eleven. In all three subjects the school's analysis of the raw data from the results of national tests and other standardised tests indicates that the pupils are making more than average progress throughout the key stage. Although the trend in performance is upward in all of the subjects this has not yet been translated into a significant rise in the number of pupils who attain Level 4, the expected level, by the age of eleven. Nevertheless, the school has identified a significant shift attainment among the pupils who reach Level 3. In the most recent tests, significantly more of the pupils who reached Level 3 came closer to reaching Level 4 than has been the case in previous years. Changes to the teaching have helped to raise standards. The positive impact the teaching is having is, however, clearly evident in the much of the pupils' current work. There are still some aspects of the teaching, though, that are preventing the school from pushing standards still higher and at a faster-rate. For example, some of the teachers do not have consistently high expectations of the pupils: they sometimes do too much for them and do not present the pupils with sufficiently challenging tasks. Nor do they make the pupils sufficiently aware of their own learning in relation to what is expected of them in national tests – as a result some of the average and higher attaining pupils, who could do better, do not do so because they do not have a strong enough sense of urgency or purpose in relation to their learning. Although the school has succeeded in getting more of its higher attaining pupils to Level 5, there are more who could achieve better results, particularly in mathematics, for the reasons given above, but also because the Framework for numeracy has not been implemented with the same degree of success as that for literacy.

5. The pattern of attainment in most of the other subjects of the curriculum, among pupils in Year 6, broadly matches that expected nationally of pupils aged eleven. The pupils achieve well in physical education and in information and communication technology because the teaching makes effective use of resources and, more than in other subjects, sets suitably challenging learning tasks. Examples of this were seen consistently in lessons in Years 4 and 6. In physical education lessons in Year 5, for example, the teachers set demanding tasks and kept the pace of learning brisk. Attainment in geography, and in design and technology is below the national expectations for the reasons described above for pupils at Key Stage 1.

6. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall and achieve well in relation to the targets set out in their individual education plans. This is particularly so at the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 where there is more support available. Some of the higher attaining pupils, however, do not achieve as well as they could because teachers do not expect enough of them. The pupils who are learning to be bilingual make rapid progress in the nursery and good progress thereafter. This helps them to benefit from all of the learning opportunities and to achieve well.

7. The school has made a satisfactory response to the key issue to raise standards, and it can point to solid evidence of improved performance – even though this is not yet being represented in significantly higher numbers of pupils attaining at or above the expected level at Key Stage 2. In order to address low standards, the school has successfully improved the quality of the teaching, the use of resources, the way the curriculum is planned and the way the pupils are organised for learning. It has made good use, too, of the benefits of being a participant in the local Education Action Zone. For example, it has been able to support the teachers more effectively by providing more classroom assistants and better resources. One example of this is the equipping of each class with an overhead projector of its own. This has had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in literacy

lessons. The main weakness in the school's response to raising standards is the level of some teachers' expectations of the pupils – too often, they do more for the pupils than is necessary. Some pupils, therefore, remain passive, rather than active, learners.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The children in the nursery and reception classes have good attitudes to school. The attitudes among the pupils at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are satisfactory. Many approach their work with a readiness to 'get on with it', and persevere with the tasks set for them. A small number of pupils continue to present demanding attitudes to work, such as being reluctant to answer questions, or by resisting opportunities to show initiative in their own work. In the few lessons at Key Stage 2 where pupils' attitudes were unsatisfactory, the work set was not well planned or sufficiently demanding, so the pupils' interest waned. This picture is similar to that of the previous inspection, though the number of incidents in which the pupils show unsatisfactory attitudes to work has been greatly reduced.

9. The behaviour of the children in the nursery and the pupils at Key Stage 1 is good. Overall, it is satisfactory at Key Stage 2, but there were examples of good and very good behaviour also. Throughout the school, the pupils generally respond well to the school's expectations of them, so that behaviour in class is, overall, good. Where the teaching encourages the more passive pupils to take a greater part in lessons, the behaviour is better. Often the pupils in Key Stage 1 behave very well in the assembly hall, especially when adults are close at hand. In the few lessons at Key Stage 2, where pupils' behaviour was unsatisfactory, the pupils made insufficient progress. This was because the teachers did not insist that the pupils paid attention to them, and were not successful in reducing behaviour that distracted others from their work. In lessons, and around the school, the pupils speak politely to adults and try very hard not to interrupt. Good examples of this positive behaviour were seen in personal and social education lessons, where the pupils have the opportunity to discuss matters that concern them directly.

10. The pupils' behaviour around the school and in the playground is satisfactory. Lunchtime is often a pleasant occasion because pupils use the dining hall in a responsible manner. They line up to receive meals and they chat happily because they are well organised and monitored. Although the pupils are friendly towards each other in the playground, a few of them play very energetically, particularly at lunch times, and engage in too much pushing of others. At these times, and especially when pupils play in large groups without direct supervision, there is a lack of self-discipline. Some pupils are unclear about the rules of the playground and encroach into the personal space of others without considering the consequences.

11. During the inspection, pupils played and worked together in mixed gender, ethnic and age groups. There was no evidence of intentional unkindness or racism. The pupils' behaviour in corridors is often good, but, occasionally, some the older pupils barge through doors without thought for others. The school promotes moral and social issues well, but some pupils' understanding of these is not always well reflected their actions and behaviour. The school has very successfully reduced the rate of pupil exclusions from double figures to zero. This is a considerable achievement and reflects the good efforts of staff in dealing with a number of very challenging pupils.

12. The quality of relationships is good. Most pupils respect differences between themselves and others. For example, the pupils listened respectfully when a lesson touched upon the rituals and dress code of Muslims when praying in the Mosque. The relationships between the pupils and members of staff are good. Teachers and other adults in the classroom insist on politeness, and most pupils try to respond in a courteous manner. Many pupils readily offer to help others. This happened for example in a Year 1 physical education lesson, where pupils quickly overcame difficulties with collars and buttons by helping each other to change before and after the lesson.

13. The pupils' personal development is satisfactory. The pupils with special needs are completely accepted and well integrated into the school. All of the pupils respond well when asked to clear away after lessons. They enjoy competing for house points. They understand that the school celebrates success, and that achievements are recognised through a series of awards and certificates. One child was proud to receive a 'nice to know' award so early in the term. Older pupils help with registers, and some Year 6 pupils have prefect duties.

14. Attendance levels are poor and have fallen since the previous inspection to 91.3 per cent. This is explained by fact that three pupils were educated off-site last year and were counted as absent. Had they received attendance marks, the rate of absence would have matched that of previous years. Nevertheless, the rate of authorised absence remains too high, and there is still some way to go before attendance matches the national average. During the inspection, registers were accurately completed. The irregular attendance of some pupils, and the extended holidays taken by others, is having a detrimental effect on their progress. Some pupils, too, are frequently late for registration. This sometimes affects the time at which lessons begin.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of the teaching is good overall, but particularly so in the nursery and in a number of subjects at Key Stages 1 and 2. Of the hundred lessons observed, the teaching was satisfactory or better in ninety-six of them, good or better in fifty-eight of them and unsatisfactory in four of them. The quality of the teaching has, therefore, improved significantly since the last inspection, when the teaching in fifteen lessons out of a hundred was unsatisfactory. The improvement is the result of well-managed measures to improve the teachers' subject knowledge across a range of subjects. For example, the school has implemented the national initiative for literacy well and has been very successful in raising the teachers' confidence and expertise in teaching information and communication technology. There are other reasons why the teaching has improved. The school has invested much time and energy in reducing the incidence of disruptive behaviour during lessons. The school has also begun to make more effective use of the resources it receives from its participation in the local *Education Action Zone*. It has, for example, used them to deploy more learning support assistants to help the teachers. It has also made changes to the way the pupils are organised for work in literacy and numeracy. These measures have combined to make teaching easier and more effective.

16. The teaching at the Foundation Stage is consistently good or better. The teachers have secure subject knowledge. They quickly establish good relationships with the children, who are often diffident and withdrawn when they are admitted. They successfully encourage the

children to settle quickly to the daily routines so that they are able to take full advantage of the learning opportunities offered at the school. The teachers prepare and organise these well. The teaching in the nursery is particularly good at meeting the needs of the children who enter the school with very low attainment. It places a strong focus on the early development of language and social skills that aid learning in other areas. The teaching is also very well adapted to meet the needs of the children who are at a very early stage in learning English as an additional language. As a result, the children make good progress and soon become sufficiently bilingual to be able to benefit from the all of the learning opportunities. Although there are no significant weaknesses in the teaching at the Foundation Stage, the teaching in a few lessons in the reception classes did not provide sufficient challenge, particularly for the higher attaining children. As a result, some of the pupils did not make as much progress as they could.

17. The teaching is good across the Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in English, art, music physical education and personal, health and social education. In all the other subjects it is at least satisfactory and much of it is good. The quality of teaching has improved significantly in information and communication technology because teachers share their expertise well and make good use of the school's resources.

18. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is at least satisfactory, and some of it is good. The learning activities are generally appropriate to the needs of pupils because the teachers work from well-constructed individual learning plans that clearly state each pupil's learning targets. As a result most of the pupils make good progress, particularly up to and including the end of Key Stage 1. Not all teachers make effective use of the available learning support assistants, particularly during the introductory and closing parts of the lessons. Some opportunities to support the pupils, therefore, are missed.

19. The teaching of pupils learning to be bilingual is satisfactory overall and good in the nursery and in science and throughout the school. The teachers are able to draw on the expertise of a bilingual teacher who works mainly in the nursery and reception classes and whose own practice is good. Another strength of the teaching for pupils who are learning to be bilingual is the quality of the extra support they are given in science lessons at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 to help them master and use scientific language and ideas. As a result, there has been a noticeable improvement in the performance of the pupils in the national tests in science at both key stages.

20. One of the strengths of the teaching is the high expectations teachers have of the pupils' behaviour in lessons. The teachers make it very clear what kind of behaviour is acceptable and what is not. They achieve this because they are effective at establishing good relationships with the pupils in which there is mutual trust and respect. As a result, most of the pupils are keen to co-operate and willing to listen to instructions and explanations. Another strength in the teaching in most subjects is the teachers' use of resources. This is particularly the case in literacy lessons in which the teachers made very good use of overhead projectors to support the pupils' study of texts in ways that enabled all of the pupils to learn from the teachers' demonstrations. It also helps the pupils to make their own contributions to discussions. The teachers make good use of information technology to support learning in history, art, music and mathematics. These resources are also well used to teach specific skills in information and communication technology itself. For example, the facilities in the computer suite are well used by teachers to present the pupils with exciting and challenging

tasks such as creating multi-media presentations of high quality. In information technology lessons and in lessons in geography, and physical education, the teaching often presents good opportunities for the pupils to acquire the skills they need to become independent learners. In these lessons, the teachers insist that the pupils think for themselves when solving problems or when seeking information. Most teachers are skilled at asking questions and leading class discussions, and many of them share the lesson's learning objectives with their pupils. This helps the pupils to understand what they will be expected to know and do by the end of a lesson.

21. Although the teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, there are still some weaknesses. These arise largely because some teachers over-protect the pupils. This arises out of the teachers' recognition that the self-esteem and confidence of many of the pupils are fragile. Whilst the teachers strive hard to make lessons interesting and to make pupils feel safe and well cared for, they sometimes do too much for them, and sometimes set them work that is not sufficiently challenging. There are some teachers, too, who do not consistently insist upon a brisk pace to the learning. The evidence of the inspection is that the teachers have done a good job in creating the right conditions for learning, but that not all of them have consistently high expectations of the pupils' ability to learn well and improve their performance. This is particularly the case with regard to some of the average attaining and higher attaining pupils. The teachers are good at sharing the learning objectives for each lesson with the pupils, but they do not make it sufficiently clear to them what it is the pupils need to do in order to attain the expected age-related levels in the main subjects. The pupils, therefore, do not have a sufficiently clear idea of what is expected of them at each level of attainment, and do not have a sufficiently strong sense of urgency in working towards new goals. The senior teachers are aware of these weakness and have already put in place measures to remedy them, including a special professional development opportunity for all teachers and classroom assistants to explore a programme aimed at accelerating the pupils' learning and levels of achievement. There are some minor weaknesses in the teaching that also affect the quality of learning: some teachers are not consistent in their use of homework and, occasionally, miss opportunities to link mathematics with work in other subjects.

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

22. The curriculum for the children at the Foundation Stage is comprehensive, very well planned and fully implemented. The learning activities are well focused on the needs of most of the reception and nursery children, and are based upon the 'stepping stones' for each *Area of Learning*. The children with special educational needs and those who are learning to be bilingual are catered for very well.

23. The curriculum for the pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and balanced. It includes the full range of subjects of the National Curriculum, and religious education. The information technology curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now satisfactory: standards in this subject have improved significantly. The amount of time allocated to the school day is broadly average in comparison with other schools, but the use of teaching time is not always effective. Too many lessons, for example, start late. The specialist skills among the members of staff are well used, and this is beginning to have a positive impact upon the quality of teaching and learning. For example, the school makes use of

specialist teaching in mathematics, information and communication technology and in the provision for the pupils who are learning to be bilingual.

24. The curriculum has improved because the school has made effective use of guidelines published by the *Qualifications and Curriculum Authority*, and has received useful guidance from its local authority support agencies to help it identify and plan for each subject. Because the work is now better matched to the pupils' needs, standards are beginning to rise. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented and is helping to raise standards. Although the National Numeracy Strategy has also been implemented, some of the teaching does not sufficiently reinforce numeracy skills. As a result, standards are not rising quickly enough. The school is aware of this. It has arranged a five-day course on teaching numeracy for those teachers who have not already attended one.

25. The school makes good provision for the pupils who have special educational needs. It quickly identifies their needs. Where necessary, it draws up appropriate individual learning plans that help the teachers to ensure that the pupils get the support they need. This helps the pupils to benefit from all of the learning opportunities provided at the school. Overall, the school makes satisfactory provision for the pupils who are learning to be bilingual. At the Foundation Stage, when the children are at a very early stage of learning English as an additional language, they get well-targeted support from a bilingual teacher who is very effectively deployed to support the children who need extra help. Because they get effective support early in their education, the children make good progress and are well prepared for participating in the full curriculum offered by the school at key Stage 1 and key Stage 2. The school makes sure that no pupil is discriminated against on grounds of age, gender, ability, social background, faith or ethnic origin. Where it identifies that some pupils are not benefiting as well as others from the available learning opportunities, the school takes effective action: a good example of this, is the extra support given in science lessons to pupils who are learning to be bilingual.

26. The curriculum includes a programme of personal, social and health education. This is organised and taught effectively through a combination of special lessons and through work in science. Among other things, it includes activities that help to raise the pupils' awareness of drugs. It also helps the pupils to resolve personal difficulties and to get on with each other. The school runs a *Peace Makers Project*, which attempts to show pupils how to deal with potential areas of personal conflict. The school has a policy on sex education that has been agreed by the governing body.

27. The community makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. The school's participation in the local *Education Action Zone* is helping it to forge stronger links with its community. For example, it has successfully extended its established mothers and toddlers group, and, through its learning-link workers, a *reading buddies* programme, and a summer school. These initiatives are fairly recent, but they are beginning to foster a climate in which the wider community can contribute to the school's provision for the pupils' learning. A parents' focus group, established last year, helps parents understand, and contribute to, the life and work of the school. For example, it provides a useful forum in which parents can discuss educational issues. The local church makes a valuable contribution through its *All Stars* club, which is proving to be popular among the older pupils. The school organises an adult education programme that helps to strengthen the links between the school and the community it serves. A number of parents have, for example, successfully completed a

classroom assailants' course. As a result, some of them now work at the school. The school also organises classes in Urdu that are well attended. The school arranges for visiting speakers and specialists to contribute to the pupils' learning. For example, a member of the local community was invited to talk about their experiences as a wartime evacuee, and others, such as artists and writers, contribute to lessons during the school's annual arts week. The pupils make their own contribution to the wider community through their support of national children's charities.

28. The school's relationship with its partner institutions is good. All available educational agencies are well used, for example, in supporting pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning to be bilingual. The school has very good contacts with local secondary schools, which willingly share their facilities. This has allowed some secondary pupils to present drama workshops in the school that were enjoyed and appreciated by the pupils. The secondary schools have also contributed to better sporting facilities and to improved teaching in sports.

29. The school makes good provision for the pupils' moral and social development, satisfactory provision for their cultural development, but unsatisfactory provision for their spiritual development. The quality of provision for the pupils' spiritual development is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection. One of the weaknesses in provision arises from lack of opportunity in assemblies for pupils to reflect on spiritual matters. This was evident even in the special assembly to commemorate the recent tragic events in America. The school does not have a well-established policy that offers teachers guidance on how to identify how the subjects of the National Curriculum might contribute to the pupils' spiritual development. The planning for this aspect of the school's work is left to individual teachers so the provision uneven. Nevertheless, there is some very good practice at the school. In a personal and social education lesson on friendship, for example, the teacher skilfully helped the pupils reflect deeply on the meaning of friendship and how the views of our friends affect how we value ourselves. In other lessons too, the teachers successfully catered for their pupils' spiritual development. Examples of this were seen when pupils responded to learning opportunities in music and geography. On such occasions, their interest and delight is obvious. The school develops some aspects of the pupils' spiritual awareness through lessons in religious education. The school's annual arts week also contributes to the pupils' spiritual development.

30. The school has worked hard to improve the way it provides for the pupils' moral development and has been successful in doing so. The pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. They are helped to reflect on their attitudes towards each other. As a result, relationships among the pupils are good, and standards of behaviour throughout the school have improved significantly. The teachers set a good example to the pupils. They treat the pupils with courtesy and they value the pupils' contributions to lessons. Hence most of the pupils have positive attitudes towards adults. They behave well in lessons and listen carefully to instructions. The school's high expectations of the pupils' moral and social behaviour are consistently reinforced in all classrooms. The pupils benefit from the reward systems, through which the school acknowledges their achievements.

31. The school provides well for the pupils' social development. The pupils are encouraged to carry out their responsibilities conscientiously. These include many routine tasks around the school, as well as more social responsibilities, such as looking after younger children. The

school is at an early stage of setting up a school council. This is intended to provide a forum for the pupils' ideas and opinions. However, not much has been achieved because changes in staffing have severely curtailed the council's activities. The school also promotes the pupils' social awareness through opportunities for them to raise funds for charities. School trips and residential visits make a valuable contribution to the pupils' social development. Activities, such as carol singing to senior citizens, also encourage a sense of social responsibility among the pupils.

32. The school makes satisfactory provision for the pupils' cultural development. The curriculum provides the pupils with opportunities to learn about their own cultural heritage, as well as that of other countries. For example, in lessons in English, history, music and science, the pupils acquire a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of past and present cultures. Their learning is enhanced by visits to museums and places of cultural interest. Events such as the Christmas pantomime are used to celebrate Black Country music, humour and song. The school now has a brass band that plays in assemblies. The pupils learn about other cultures in geography and art lessons, but there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to enjoy and learn about music from other cultures. The diversity of the school's cultural mix is celebrated in assemblies and in special events, such as visits from an Asian dance group. In religious education lessons, the pupils from different faiths have opportunities to share what they know with others.

33. The school's provision of activities outside normal lesson time is satisfactory. It arranges clubs at lunchtimes and after school that enrich the pupils' experiences and contribute to their learning and social development. The activities provide opportunities for the pupils to participate in a range of sports and arts activities, and in computer and environmental activities. Some activities are well supported by members of the local church community. The school is the venue for lessons in Urdu. These are well attended and provide a useful service to young local Moslems. The school also provides opportunities for sharing bilingual books with families for whom English is an additional language. The *Education Action Zone* initiative has provided funding that has helped to support the school's endeavours to stimulate awareness of what it has to offer children and adults in the wider community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school takes a responsible approach to caring for its pupils. Overall, its procedures are satisfactory and some of them are good. For example, the school has good Child Protection procedures, and its arrangements fully meet statutory requirements.

35. The school has good procedures for monitoring and eliminating unkind or oppressive behaviour. As a result, there has been an impressive drop in the number of incidents of oppressive and disruptive behaviour at the school. The number of pupils excluded has also dropped dramatically, from double figures some years ago, to no exclusions at all. The teachers record misbehaviour, including racist incidents. These are dealt with promptly.

36. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are at least satisfactory and some of them are good. The weekly *Achievement Assemblies* are effective ways of recognising the pupils' efforts and of rewarding them for their personal commitment to work and good behaviour. Each class has a set of rules. These are regularly brought to the

pupils' attention. The way the teachers manage the pupils' behaviour in class has improved significantly.

37. The pupils respond well to the care provided by the school. The teachers and learning support assistants deal with pupils in a friendly, considerate manner and help the pupils to develop useful personal and social skills. This is reflected in the parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire in which more than fifty parents (out of the sixty-one who returned the questionnaire) agreed that their children liked school and that the school helped their children to become mature and responsible. The arrangements for mid-day supervision are satisfactory. Senior teachers are on duty to support the supervisors. Each class is allocated a supervisor who reports directly to the appropriate class teacher on the pupils' behaviour and other issues. However, the midday supervisors do not contribute as much as they could because there is no arrangement for them to help the school implement its rewards and sanctions system by, for example, issuing merits for good behaviour.

38. Although the school has implemented a typical set of procedures for monitoring and improving attendance, they are not proving effective enough: levels of attendance are worse now than at the time of the last inspection. However, if the absences of those pupils who received education off-site last year are taken into account, the rate of attendance broadly matches that of last year. Even so, attendance is still unsatisfactory. The current monitoring of attendance provides the school with enough information to enable it to identify patterns of absence among the different groups of pupils, such as boys and girls, and pupils of different ethnic origins. The school has taken some steps to improve attendance, such as rewarding pupils for good attendance, and making available additional administrative support to target those pupils whose attendance raises concern. It also stresses the importance of regular attendance in its prospectus and in the year-group newsletters. These measures, however, have not been sufficient to bring about significant improvements among those who habitually take time off on Mondays and Fridays, or who take extended holidays to Pakistan. The school is not able to respond immediately to every unexplained absence because a significant number of the parents cannot be contacted by telephone. However, the school works closely with the education welfare officer to help it contact parents who do not respond to telephone calls or letters.

39. The school cares well for pupils with special educational needs. It keeps an up-to-date register and has an effective system in place for identifying needs early. The pupils' individual education plans set out clear and achievable learning targets that help pupils and teachers to understand what needs to be done to ensure effective learning takes place. The pupils' progress is reviewed regularly, and the school makes good use of the specialist advice it receives from the visiting adviser. The administrative arrangements for the Annual Reviews are good. The school makes effective use of support offered in the classroom and in small groups withdrawn for special work. For example, the pupils at Key Stage 1 who receive one-to-one reading support make good progress. In Key Stage 2, the provision is satisfactory but the way the teachers use the available support varies. In some lessons, for example, the learning assistants were not active enough in supporting learning during the sessions when the teacher was instructing the whole class.

40. The school has satisfactory assessment procedures. It regularly assesses the children at the Foundation Stage. The outcomes are recorded in relation to progress in English, mathematics and personal and social education. The support the school is able to offer its young children is significantly enhanced by the information gained during home visits and through parents participation in its *Sure Start* scheme.

41. At Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the school makes good use of the results of statutory tests and voluntary tests to identify trends in performance. Thus, the performance of boys and girls is evaluated, as well as that of pupils from different ethnic groups. The school acts on its findings. For example, it supplemented provision in science for pupils learning to be bilingual and who were having difficulty understanding and using scientific terms and concepts. The school also makes use of assessments of pupils' progress across a range of subjects, and records the level of knowledge and understanding of individual pupils. When pupils transfer to a new class, the school ensures that receiving teachers are given the assessment history for each pupil for whom he or she is responsible. The school makes effective use of the information it gathers to organise teaching groups and ability groups within classes. The analysis of assessment information has also helped the school to identify pupils' needs more effectively. As a result, the pupils who require extra support are identified and arrangements are made to meet their needs. In order to do this, the school has employed extra teachers for literacy and numeracy and created booster groups aimed at driving up standards. It has also led to the deployment of more learning assistants. The recently developed marking policy is being well implemented by most teachers. This has resulted in marking of high quality in most classes. The marking now gives more help to pupils on how to improve their work and what to do next, but it does not adequately help the pupils to understand the standards they attain in relation to standards expected of them for their age.

42. The teachers set individual targets for improvement on an annual basis. These are indicated in the annual written reports to parents. The school tracks each pupil's progress to see how well expectations are met, but sometimes the targets for literacy and numeracy are not sufficiently specific or challenging enough to be helpful to pupils. Not all of the pupils are aware of their own targets for improvement in these subjects. However, the school has good procedures for agreeing targets with the pupils for their personal and social development. These are also shared with parents.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Overall, the school has a good relationship with the parents. This has a positive impact on how the pupils learn, and is beginning to show in what the pupils achieve. The parents feel that they have good access to the school and can approach the staff with their concerns. The views expressed by the parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire are generally supportive. Overall, the parents are happy with the provision the school makes. They feel comfortable in approaching the school with questions or problems. They feel that their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best, and that the school is well managed and the teaching is good. The evidence of the inspection supports their views.

44. The information for parents is good. The school sends out regular newsletters that provide parents with a useful overview of the school's work. For example, the teachers in each year group issue a newsletter each term that provides information on topics to be taught. Some of the newsletters give advice to parents on how they can support their children's learning in relation to the topics to be covered. In all of the year-group newsletters, the parents are reminded of the need to hear their children read regularly and maintain good rates of attendance. The pupils in Year 6 keep homework diaries and personal organisers and are encouraged to share them with their parents. The school provides good information to parents of nursery children. This helps the parents to make sure that their children are well prepared for their introduction to school.

45. The school holds regular parents evenings, though these are less well attended than the school would like. These meetings are used to inform parents of their children's progress and to share information that will help teachers and parents meet the pupils' needs. In the autumn term, teachers help each pupil to draw up a profile that contains his or her personal targets for improvement. These are later discussed and agreed with the parents at an open evening. The parents of pupils in Year 6 are provided with an opportunity to discuss the school's arrangements for the national tests. The annual reports to parents on their children's achievements and progress provide all the statutory information. Although much of the content is computer generated, the comments are made specific to each pupil. The report also contains teachers' hand-written comments that give each parent useful information about their child's personal and social development. There is space on the report for parents to respond to what is said about their children. Nearly all of the slips returned to the school contain positive comments. The school carefully analyses the returned slips and responds to the issues raised in them.

46. The governors' annual report to parents provides sufficient information about the work of the governors to keep parents adequately informed. The prospectus is attractively presented and contains useful information on the activities of the school, including rates of absence and information about the standards at the school in relation to national ones.

47. The school makes a positive contribution to life of the local community. It arranges lessons in Urdu for adults and older pupils and it provides many parents with opportunities to learn new skills. For example it arranges first aid classes, sugar-pate classes and classes in computer technology. It also runs a course for parents who wish to become classroom assistants. A number of parents who have obtained qualifications in these subjects and some are now employed at the school. Through the START project, the school provides a family literacy course that helps the parents make resources to support literacy learning at home. The school runs two popular mother-and-toddler groups that provide parents with their first contact with the school. These are well run and provide good advice and guidance to parents.

48. The school works well in partnership with the parents of pupils who have special educational needs. They are regularly invited to reviews of their children's progress, and are kept informed about the targets set for them. The school has useful links, too, with the parents of pupils who are learning to be bilingual. The school's bilingual teacher plays a major role in maintaining positive relationships between the parents and the school. The school provides parents with key documents, such as the home/school agreement, in their own language and it provides interpretation services at important meetings. The school drew up the home school agreement after consulting the parents' representatives on the governing body. It then circulated a summary of the document to all parents and invited them to submit their responses before adopting the agreement as school policy.

49. The school is developing a good approach to the way it includes parents in its life and work. Last year it established a parents' focus group. This is open to all parents. The school works hard to ensure that it is representative of the different groups within the school. The well-attended mother and toddler groups have been successful in providing parents with another forum, and with many opportunities to learn about, and use, ideas for promoting their children's learning at home. The school encourages parents to contribute in other ways, too. For example, parents help in running the school disco and the spring fayre. Some of the

parents help run the school library, whilst others support the school's football teams. Others help with the school pantomime. There are good opportunities for parents and pupils to share special occasions such as achievement assemblies, the Easter service in the local church, school picnics, and trips to the local safari park and to the theatre.

50. The school is aware that a significant minority of parents do not respond well to written communications and that this sometimes means they are not as well informed as they could be. The weak response to written matter was exemplified in the small number of returns (sixty-one out of four hundred and fourteen issued) for the pre-inspection questionnaire to parents. The school has, therefore, begun to explore a range of other ways of contacting parents and of keeping them informed. For example, the school has an open-door policy that encourages parents to contact teachers and other staff at the end of the school day. It deploys its learning-link worker well to make personal contact with parents. At a recent parent's evening, for example, the link workers were in the foyer to welcome parents and to tell them about plans to provide a course for parents who needed help with managing their children's behaviour. Because the school recognises the importance of effective communication with parents, it has included it in its most recent action plan.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The school's aims to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and to promote high standards of moral and social behaviour are more faithfully reflected in its present work than they were at the time of the last inspection. This is mainly because the headteacher and senior staff have successfully raised the standards of teaching throughout the school, and significantly improved standards of behaviour. It has also begun to make more effective use of the extra resources and opportunities made available to the school through its participation in the local Education Action Zone. As a result the pupils' learning is more effective and the standards they attain are beginning to rise more quickly.

52. The leadership has also responded well to the key issues for action set out in the last report and in the monitoring report of visiting HMI. One outcome of their diligent work is better results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 1, where most of the pupils have felt the benefit of the improvements since they began full-time education. At Key Stage 2, the improvements have been too recent to benefit pupils to the same extent. However, there are early signs that standards are rising, even though these have not yet been translated into a higher proportion of pupils reaching the expected level. The senior management team has made a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the raw data from the national tests that demonstrate year-on-year improvements in English, mathematics and science among its eleven-year-old pupils. These increases, though still too small, show a significant rise in the number of pupils who though still at Level 3, are within only a few points of attaining Level 4. One of the strengths of the leadership is the way it has monitored and evaluated the school's performance in relation to other schools, particularly similar ones, and used the information to inform planning and changes to the teaching. As a result, the school has a curriculum better suited to the needs of the pupils, better resources for learning and more confident and effective teachers.

53. The governing body fulfils most of its statutory duties well. It is more effective than it was because it has recruited more parents and representatives of the local community onto its committee. It has invested wisely in training opportunities to enable the new members to understand their roles better and to make a greater contribution to the governors' monitoring of the work of the school. The governors ensure that the school has an appropriate policy to help it monitor the performance of the teachers and headteacher. They closely monitor the construction and implementation of the school's action plan and budget. There is sufficient expertise among its members to ensure that the school's financial resources are well spent. They ensure that the budget is spent on appropriate educational priorities, and they are not afraid to ask challenging questions of the head teacher and key staff. However, because so many of the members are recent appointments, they have yet to develop an adequate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses based upon first-hand knowledge. As a result, the governors are currently too dependent upon information from the senior management team to be able to carry out their role as critical friends of the school effectively. Nevertheless, they have a growing understanding of their responsibility to monitor the quality of education provided at the school and the performance of its pupils, and an eagerness to accept it.

54. The teachers with responsibilities for managing subjects and other aspects of the school's work are generally effective: the work of the co-ordinators for information and communication technology, English, science and physical education have made significant contributions to improving the curriculum and raising the quality of education provided at the school. This is clearly seen in physical education, where the pupils have benefited from the development of a well planned teaching programme, and in information and communication technology where the skilful use of the new resources have enabled pupils to make significant progress in acquiring a range of skills to enable them to use technology for learning in other subjects. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages provision well. She ensures that the pupils' needs are met through the careful deployment of support assistants and the provision of good quality individual learning plans for the pupils who need them. The headteacher oversees the work of the teachers and other staff who support the pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. The support offered at the Foundation Stage is particularly effective and accounts for much of the good progress these pupils make.

55. There are no significant weaknesses in the work of the school's leadership, but there are some areas in which it needs to take a more vigorous action. For example, it needs to ensure that all of the teachers have the same high expectations of what pupils can achieve as those of its most effective teachers. It needs to provide more guidance to teachers on how they can help the pupils to set personal targets, particularly in English and mathematics, and help the pupils to understand what standards they are expected to attain by the end of Year 6. The leadership also needs to explore new strategies for reducing the level of pupil absence.

56. The management of the school is good. The daily routines are effective in creating a pleasant, orderly and workman-like environment in which pupils can learn. The work of clerical staff, learning support assistants, mid-day supervisors and cleaning staff all contribute significantly to the smooth running of the school. This frees teachers to concentrate on teaching and on meeting the needs of the pupils.

57. The school's financial planning is sound overall. The governors monitor the budget well. The head teacher, the governors and the school administrator control the school's finances

effectively. The school has appropriate educational priorities linked to the available budget. However, the way it monitors what impact its spending has on standards and progress is limited. The school makes a thorough analysis of the contracts and local service-level agreements available to it. It also carefully monitors its own performance and compares it with standards in other schools. It makes its major decisions, therefore, according to the principles of best value. One of the minor issues arising from the 1999 auditor's report was the absence of an annual check on the inventory. This issue needs to be addressed and the outcome of its audit reported to the governing body on an annual basis.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. In order to improve standards further, the headteacher and governors should:

- (1) Raise standards of attainment in English and mathematics by: *
 - Helping the pupils to a better understanding of their present level of attainment, and what they need to do to attain the next one,
 - Making better use of the available time, by:
 - Increasing the pace of teaching and learning,
 - Insisting upon a prompt start to lessons,
 - Improving the way the school implements the Framework for numeracy.
(Paragraphs: 1-7, 15 - 21, 55, 69 - 75, and 76 – 81)

- (2) Raise the expectations of all teachers, in line with the best practice at the school, by: *
 - Consistently providing activities that fully challenge the pupils,
 - Finding ways to strengthen the self-image of some pupils,
 - Finding ways of encouraging reluctant pupils to participate in lessons and take an appropriate measure of responsibility for their own learning,
 - Helping pupils to set their own targets for improvement, particularly in English and mathematics.
(Paragraphs: 15 –20, 55, 65, 66, 75, 79, 85, 93, and 97)

- (3) Ensure higher rates of attendance by: *
 - Encouraging more parents to support the school’s drive towards higher levels of attendance
 - Seeking ways to reduce absences at the beginning and end of the week,
 - Devising and implementing greater rewards for the pupils who do attend regularly,
 - Encouraging parents who take their children away on extended holidays to reduce the amount of time their children are absent,
 - Keeping all parents regularly informed of the patterns of attendance, and what causes them.
(Paragraphs: 8 – 14, 38, and 55)

Further issues:

- Improve the way the school provides for the pupils’ spiritual development,

- Improve the governors understanding of the schools’ strengths and weaknesses by implementing a schedule of visits to monitor the work of the school and to talk to pupils and staff.

* The school is aware of these areas for development and has some measures in place already.

SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	100
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	12	46	38	4	0	0
Percentage	0	12	46	38	4	0	0

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

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)	30	384
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		107

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		174

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	82

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	32

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.6
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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	32	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	17	23
	Girls	14	14	16
	Total	33	31	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	58 (49)	54 (41)	68 (51)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	22	17
	Girls	14	17	12
	Total	33	39	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	58 (49)	68 (53)	51 (56)
	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	23	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	8	15
	Girls	11	9	15
	Total	17	117	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	38 (50)	38 (43)	67 (56)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	4	88	9
	Girls	12	10	12
	Total	16	18	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	36 (44)	40 (46)	47 (48)
	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	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	13
Indian	3
Pakistani	80
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	288
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.3
Average class size	25.2

Education support staff: YN – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	190

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	70
Number of pupils per FTE adult	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.6
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.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	200/01
	£
Total income	915694
Total expenditure	911256
Expenditure per pupil	2129
Balance brought forward from previous year	35769
Balance carried forward to next year	40207

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	414
Number of questionnaires returned	61

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	34	5	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	46	7	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	43	12	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	44	12	9	4
The teaching is good.	52	41	0	3	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	43	15	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	36	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	41	2	2	3
The school works closely with parents.	36	43	11	7	5
The school is well led and managed.	45	40	3	7	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	40	7	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	28	23	7	10

Fourteen parents attended the pre-inspection parents' meeting.

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

Personal, social and emotional development

59. The children make good progress in their personal and social development because the school places a high priority on it and promotes it effectively, both in the nursery and in the reception classes. The teachers take every opportunity to ensure that children feel safe, happy and secure. As a result, the nursery children demonstrate positive attitudes to school. They respond well when encouraged to relate to each other and to adults. Because many of the children are learning English as an additional language, the teachers place great emphasis providing times when children can talk in small groups with adults. These activities cater well for those who are learning to be bilingual. The children are helped to grow in confidence and to experiment and participate in the full range of activities. In this way, the children are introduced very well to school routines. They are encouraged to voice their likes and dislikes, to share and to take turns. The reception children are taught to work and play co-operatively, and helped to increase their understanding of acceptable behaviour. The older children quickly develop a good understanding of what is expected of them, and learn the difference between right and wrong. The children develop independence quickly: many children make good attempts at taking care of themselves. This increasing independence and eagerness to participate in tasks enables them to make choices for themselves, to be responsible and to care for the things they use. In nursery and reception, the children learn to work independently as well as in small groups. The reception children persevere with activities without direct supervision.

60. Teaching in this area is good overall, with examples of very good teaching in the nursery. The teachers and classroom assistants establish very good relationships with the children. The teaching is very effective in meeting the needs of children with special educational needs and those who are learning to be bilingual. These children are well integrated into classes. The strong focus put on daily routines and personal and social development activities is already beginning to have a positive impact on the overall attainment and progress made by the children.

Communication, language and literacy

61. Only a small number of the children are likely to reach the level expected for five-year-olds. Most of the children in the nursery, especially those who are learning to be bilingual, find it difficult to express themselves clearly in sentences, but they are given every opportunity to copy the good examples of speech and language offered to them by their teachers - one of whom is bilingual. The teachers set aside specific times for speaking and listening skills to be taught and practised. The quality of questioning during these sessions is very good and a strength of the teachers' work. It is contributing very well to widening the children's vocabulary and is enabling them to make good progress. In the two reception classes, most of the children have learned to listen attentively to their teachers. Many wait without interrupting until it is their turn to speak. They are eager to contribute to discussions and conversations. A minority are fluent speakers. Most of the children use their developing vocabulary well to express ideas and opinions. They choose words carefully and thoughtfully when they ask and answer questions. They understand that print has meaning. The progress

they make in early reading is evident when they share books, but very few are reading simple texts on their own before they transfer to Year 1. In nursery, the children find their printed names at the beginning of each session. In the reception classes, the children write their names to identify belongings.

62. The children practise 'mark making' in a range of activities throughout the Foundation Stage. The nursery children frequently trace, draw, crayon, finger-paint and experiment with dough during indoor and outdoor tasks. They are encouraged to 'write' independently on the blackboard or produce drawings for the notice board. In the reception classes, the children acquire the skills necessary for the more formal aspects of writing. However, those who have had little pre-school experience often experience difficulty with pencil control and writing letter shapes accurately. All of the children attempt some form of independent writing. Some of the higher attaining, older children do so with a satisfactory degree of confidence. Many reception children are mastering copy-writing skills. A scrutiny of the work from last year indicates that the literacy strategy is being introduced satisfactorily at the Foundation Stage.

Mathematical development

63. A lower than average number of children are likely to reach the level expected of children before they transfer to Year 1. The majority of the children need more time to achieve the expected level. In nursery and reception, the children's learning is promoted through a useful range of practical tasks. The nursery children play games to help them to develop their knowledge of number: they count and sort bricks, shapes and toys. They make up games when they match familiar objects by colour. The older reception children extend their previous learning when they estimate and balance objects on weighing scales. The children compare the size and shape of objects with increasing accuracy. With adult prompts, they compile sets of objects according to the different criteria suggested. The most fluent children are confident when explaining why they make certain choices in the wet sand area. Whilst completing tasks, filling and emptying containers, they learn to estimate and to consider why, during an experiment, the expected outcome is sometimes different from what actually happens.

64. In the nursery, the children use a range of simple mathematical terms when they compare shapes in the sand and in water trays. When sharing milk and fruit at snack time, they tally numbers based on situations from every day life. The children attempt problem solving when they match the colours, sizes and shapes of three-dimensional equipment used to build model car tracks and roads. The children acquire further mathematical understanding when they learn to order patterns and complete jigsaws, and when they use construction toys.

65. In the reception classes, many of the children count to ten and work more confidently with numbers up to five. The higher-attaining children, with the teacher's support, are developing a secure understanding of simple addition facts up to five. The teaching is good overall: there is some very good teaching in the nursery. However, there are times in the reception classes, particularly during group activity sessions, when the children are sometimes given too much freedom of choice. As a result, the teachers miss opportunities to challenge sufficiently the children's developing understanding of mathematics.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66. Nearly all of the children are likely to reach the level expected of five-year-olds. The children who are learning to be bilingual sometimes have difficulty expressing themselves, particularly when they are attempting to make connections between past, present and future events. To compensate for this, the nursery teachers reinforce the children's understanding by offering many opportunities to handle familiar objects and to understand events that take place in the classroom. The children enjoy opportunities to do special things such as make birthday cakes. When the children do this, they are encouraged to notice how the ingredients change when they are mixed and baked. When the children reach the reception classes, they benefit from trips to places of interest that help them to understand many aspects of the local environment. Throughout the Foundation Stage, attention is paid to how newborn babies are cared for. The teachers make sure that individual children's birthdays are treated as special times. As the children become more confident, they are encouraged to reflect upon how they themselves have changed with the passage of time - from being helpless babies to relatively independent beings. In the nursery, the daily routine includes recognising and ordering the days of the week, identifying different weather conditions and raising the children's awareness of how the seasons follow one another in a particular order. From their outdoor play activities, which include an introduction to road safety, the children learn to play safely and act safely towards others. The higher attaining reception children develop a satisfactory understanding of the order of events in the school day. Most know what happens at assembly and dinnertime, and many record their findings in drawings and pictures. They are increasingly confident as they find their way around school, describing how to get to the playground or dining hall, often using gestures to indicate directions. In the nursery, the teaching places a high priority on technological skills. The children cut, stick and join when they construct three-dimensional models using re-cycled materials and construction kits. The teachers carefully guide the younger children through the different skills needed to successfully manipulate the colour cylinders on the science 'colour and shape' table. The reception children use the computer competently to form pairs and sets of objects. However, occasionally in reception, the teachers miss opportunities to direct individual pupils towards the next stage of learning. The quality of teaching is very good in nursery because the adults offer many worthwhile opportunities for children to investigate and to solve simple problems as they learn more about themselves and their environment.

Physical development

67. Most of the children are likely to reach the standard expected of them by the time they leave the reception class. The teaching is good overall: there is some very good teaching in the nursery. The carefully structured outdoor play offers the youngest children many opportunities to practise and improve how they control their bodies and manipulate toys and other equipment. Many of the children steer the wheeled toys confidently and with reasonable accuracy. The children benefit significantly from having access to large equipment both indoors and outdoors, such as the climbing frame and the slide. The teachers plan a range of indoor activities to extend the children's manipulative and physical skills. These help the children to gain finer control through cutting, painting and building activities. The teaching pays close attention to showing the children how to use tools, equipment and materials such as pencils, crayons and other tools needed to practise the small, accurate movements needed for writing letter and number shapes. Most reception children are learning to move confidently, imaginatively and with good directional control. They show

proficiency when moving at different speeds when they practise routines in the hall. The children use the school hall and the apparatus for gymnastics, games and dance with growing confidence. Early in the term, they demonstrate a good awareness of space and of their own, and others', safety. At playtimes, the children make up rules to play activities, and join in playground games that help them to develop increasing control of their bodies. The teaching for this area of learning is good because the adults encourage the children to persevere in order to improve what they do. The outside playground provides a safe area, which is sufficiently challenging and which encourages the children to respond confidently as their skills increase. The children in the reception benefit from the extra time allocated to teaching skills with wheeled toys.

Creative development

68. Most of the children are likely to achieve the level expected for their age by the time they reach the end of the reception year. The teachers provide the children with a wide range of self-managed and creative tasks to support their learning. Most of the creative elements, including sand, water and paint, are available for some part of each day. The children develop creative skills quickly and well. They listen carefully to music. The older and more confident children sing a satisfactory range of songs by heart and with a growing understanding of the importance of melody. The children successfully explore pitch, and learn to sing loudly and quietly, and to use percussion instruments to accompany simple songs. The youngest nursery children beat simple rhythms when listening to taped music. The teachers provide many opportunities for the nursery children to explore colour, shape and texture. When choosing colours and materials, the children show growing understanding of how to blend colours and match materials - as they did, for example, when they made nursery rhyme puppets. The teaching provides good opportunities for role-play in both the nursery and reception classrooms. The nursery children discover how to dress and undress as they organise a 'jumble sale'. In the home corner, the reception children act out how to feed a baby and how to prepare meals for the rest of the family. Throughout the Foundation Stage, the children learn the importance of co-operating as they play and act out different situations spontaneously and inventively. They use tools, scissors and a variety of brushes with increasing competence. The teaching is good overall. It is very good in the nursery where the children are offered many opportunities in activity sessions to experiment and learn by a process of trial and error. This has a positive impact upon the quality of learning for the youngest children. A major strength of the nursery and reception teaching is the quality of the relationships that exist: the adults support the children well because they are well prepared and work extremely effectively as a team

ENGLISH

69. The standards achieved by the pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below that expected nationally of pupils aged seven and eleven, but they are beginning to improve and are better than the standards attained in the most recent national tests. Although the schools' national test results at Key Stage 2 have not improved significantly over recent years, when expressed in terms of the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 and above, the school's own analysis of the data provides good evidence of movement *towards* Level 4. For example, the proportion of pupils with raw scores just below those needed to attain Level 4 has risen year on year. This improvement is partly the result of the school's success in raising the quality of its teaching. It is also due to the increased number of learning support assistants it has made

available to help teachers. These measures have made it much easier for teachers to meet the needs of the pupils across the full range of attainment.

70. Throughout Key Stage 1, the pupils make satisfactory progress in reading: by the time they are ready to transfer to Key Stage 2, they are achieving standards that match national expectations. The pupils read an appropriate range of texts that includes information books as well as stories and poems. They understand that authors of stories use plots, characters and description to catch and hold the reader's attention. Most of the pupils successfully contribute to group and class discussions about the authors' intentions. They make predictions about the outcome of the stories they read based on what they know about the characters and settings in them. Nearly all of the pupils use information books successfully: they know, for example, where to find the table of contents and the index, and they use illustrations to help them understand what they read. The pupils usually use more than one way of understanding difficult or unfamiliar words. For example, they use their knowledge of initial letter sounds, the surrounding text and familiar letter strings such as 'ed' and 'ing' at the end of words.

71. The evidence of the inspection indicates that the pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in reading throughout Key Stage 2, but this has only recently been the case. The school has invested wisely in more learning resources and in more classroom support for teachers. This has enabled the teachers to meet more effectively the pupils' individual needs - as a result, the pupils are learning more quickly than they did. By the age of eleven, most of the pupils read a good range of texts that includes novels, short stories, poems, plays, information books and reference books. They talk enthusiastically about favourite authors and books, and about the reading they do at home. Many of the pupils, for example, enjoy popular modern fiction by Roald Dahl and J. K. Rowling. They also read local and national newspapers and a range of family magazines. One pupil, for example, regularly reads the articles and comments in a well-known television magazine in order to keep in touch with sports events and with what is happening to the characters and actors in his favourite 'soaps.' Although the pupils use a satisfactory number of ways to read unfamiliar words they do not habitually use dictionaries to help them understand their meanings; and not all pupils are conscientious about taking their books home to read. Most, however, regularly use the school library, and some pupils visit the local public library.

72. The pupils at Key Stage 1 attain the expected standard in listening but do not attain the expected standard in speaking. By the age of seven, most of the pupils pay close attention to instructions and listen carefully when texts are read to them. Most take part in group and class discussions in which they listen and respond to the ideas of other pupils. Although the pupils are eager to contribute to discussion work, they are often hampered by the lack of an adequate vocabulary with which to express themselves. They are not as aware as they should be of Standard English usage, and this sometimes prevents them from making their meaning clear to others. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils' listening skills are well developed. Nearly all of the pupils listen carefully to instructions and to the contributions of other pupils. This is particularly the case in literacy lessons, when pupils listen to and discuss a wide range of texts. The pupils make steady progress in speaking skills, but most do not attain the expected standard of spoken Standard English. Whilst most are justly proud of their local dialect, they are not always aware of when it is more appropriate to use Standard English grammar and vocabulary - some are not confident about swapping to standard forms of expression.

73. The standards attained in writing by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are below what is expected nationally, but they are improving because the teaching is making more effective use of the national framework for literacy to plan lessons that more closely match the standard of work expected of pupils aged six and seven. Most of pupils write simple captions for their own drawings and diagrams, make lists, draw up simple instructions and write simple sentences to describe familiar things, but too few of them confidently use writing to make simple notes from non-fiction texts or write non-fiction texts themselves that include headings and sub-headings. Most of the pupils find it difficult to write sustained stories that make appropriate use of character, setting, narrative and dialogue. The pupils spelling and use of standard grammar are well below the standard expected of pupils aged seven, but most write legibly – though not many attain a fluent joint script before the transfer to Year 3.

74. The standards attained in writing by pupils at the end of Year 6 remain below national expectations. However, the evidence from lessons, and from an analysis of the pupils' written work, indicates that standards are beginning to rise. This is because the teachers' use of the National Framework for literacy is better than it was. The school has recently deployed more learning support assistants to help meet the needs of the pupils. The impact of this extra support is, however, only just beginning to be seen in higher standards. Most of the pupils attempt a wide range of forms that includes stories, poems, letters, instructions, biographies, play scripts, and diaries, but few manage to do these well without significant help from their teachers. The pupils have an adequate understanding of some aspects of grammar. For example, they know how to use verbs and adverbs; they understand the function of nouns and how they are modified by adjectives. Many successfully use speech marks and other basic forms of punctuation. However, many do not habitually or confidently use different tenses in their writing or use the active and passive forms when it is appropriate. Although most pupils write simple sentences well, too few know how to make their writing more effective by using compound, or complex sentences that include well-punctuated clauses. Most of the pupils still need much help to organise their sentences into paragraphs. The standard of spelling and handwriting is generally below what is expected for pupils aged eleven.

75. The quality of teaching is generally good. Of the eighteen lessons observed, the teaching was good or better in eleven of them. There were no lessons in which the teaching was unsatisfactory. The teaching has a number of strengths: the teachers plan literacy lessons well, make good use of learning resources, use explanation and discussion effectively, and establish good relationships with the pupils, from whom they demand high standards of behaviour. The planning takes full account of the Framework for literacy. The work prepared for the pupils is interesting and varied. It includes discussion work, clear explanations and demonstrations by the teachers, and careful sharing of each lesson's objectives. All of these features were present, for example, in the Year 6 lessons, in which the pupils were learning about biographical writing. Because the work is well planned and taught, the pupils quickly become interested and have a clear idea of what they need to do to complete their work. In nearly all of the lessons, the teachers were skilful in helping the pupils to understand the main purpose of the work and what was expected of them. In most lessons, too, the teachers were good at helping the pupils to review what they had learned. The teachers make good use of resources to aid teaching and learning, particularly over-head projectors to make the main teaching points and to engage all of the pupils in whole-class sessions. They also make good use of the pupils' individual whiteboards to involve the pupils directly in the learning tasks and to check how well the pupils understand what they are doing. In a Year 5 lesson on how to set the scene in story writing, for example, the teacher used the overhead projector well to draw

attention to elements of the text being discussed and to annotate it with useful comments made by the pupils. In the same lesson, the teacher made effective use of well-prepared teaching aids that graphically demonstrated how speech marks are used to indicate dialogue in stories. The quality of the resources and the way they were used helped the pupils to make good progress in understanding and mastering the learning objectives of the lesson. The teachers establish good levels of class control because they have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and work hard to maintain good relationships with the pupils. As a result, the pupils waste little time, and work sensibly in groups and independently. The teaching still has a number of weaknesses. Some teachers are reluctant to present the pupils with demanding work, fearing that the pupils who lack confidence will not respond well. In some lessons, the teachers did most of the work, and did not insist that all pupils make a suitable contribution to class discussions and group activities. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, in which the pupils were learning about story openings, the teacher explained all the unfamiliar words in the shared text and did not provide opportunities for the pupils to look their meanings up for themselves. This encouraged the passive learners to remain passive and discouraged the more active ones from developing independence in their learning.

MATHEMATICS

76. The proportion of pupils in Year 6 who attained the expected standards in numeracy in the national tests in 2000 was well below average. The 2001 national test results indicate a similar picture, except that the number of pupils attaining above Level 4, the expected level, has risen. The pupils in Year 2 attain standards that are below nationally expected levels, but the results of the most recent national tests show a significant improvement in performance. However, standards are still not as high as they could be. This is partly because there are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching across the school. In a few lessons, the teachers' expectations of what pupils could achieve was too low, and, as a result, a significant proportion of the pupils underachieved.

77. By the age of seven, the pupils count in tens and identify multiples of 2, 5 and 10 with reasonable confidence. They count up to 100, but few are able to solve problems with numbers larger than 100. Most of the pupils understand how to find $\frac{1}{2}$ of a shape and how to calculate simple sums involving doubling and halving numbers. They have some understanding of simple mirror symmetry. However, few children are able to identify all the lines of symmetry within two-dimensional shapes.

78. By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils successfully multiply numbers such as 3841 by single digits. They add decimal numbers and convert simple fractions to decimals accurately. They know how to express these as percentages. Approximately half of the pupils calculate the volume of cuboids. However, many of the pupils still rely too heavily on formal methods taught directly by the teacher and are reluctant to demonstrate, either verbally or through informal jottings, how they would have gone about solving a problem for themselves.

79. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory but it is satisfactory overall. The structure of the lessons is appropriate and the planning is satisfactory. In the most effective lessons, the pupils made good progress. For example, in a very good lesson, seen in Year 6, the teacher used skilful questioning to lead the pupils to a good understanding of the relationship between the 2, 4 and 8 times tables. She ensured that the pupils were clear about what was expected of them and she carefully explained what was to be learned. The work provided by the teacher met the different needs of the pupils. In another successful lesson, in Year 2, the teacher made very good use of a number line to help the pupils to

visualise multiples of 10. The teacher further reinforced the concept when she helped the pupils to use a hundred-square and learn a number game. The constant reinforcement of the concept in a variety of ways helped the pupils to consolidate their understanding. In the less successful lessons the pace of learning was too slow. For example, in the two unsatisfactory lessons, both of which were in Year 4, the work was very often undemanding, and the pupils were not sufficiently challenged. As a consequence the pupils became restless. The teachers' knowledge of the numeracy strategy was not secure in these lessons and did not always meet the needs of the higher attaining pupils. For example, the teaching made use of too narrow a range of methods and did not make effective use of questions and other techniques for getting pupils to explain their reasoning. As a result, the pupils were unable to apply their knowledge to solve other problems.

80. The school has made a good start on using computer programs to support the learning of targeted groups of pupils. However, the links between mathematics and other subjects are not yet sufficiently well developed to allow them to have a significant impact upon the quality of learning. Although homework is set, it varies in quality, and some teachers do not have clear idea of when homework should be set and how much work pupils are expected to do at home. However, the teachers make good use of the springboard and booster materials provided by the Numeracy Strategy to raise attainment, but they do not consistently involve pupils in setting targets for improvement.

81. The subject is well managed. The quality of teaching and learning is regularly reviewed. The co-ordinator is aware of the inconsistencies in the teaching: she has planned a programme of joint lessons for later in the year to help develop the teachers' skills. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The school uses informal observations and the optional tests published by the *Qualifications and Curriculum Authority* to assess the pupils' progress and to identify groups of pupils who require additional support if they are to reach the expected level by the end of Year 6.

SCIENCE

82. The inspection evidence points to significantly improved standards since the last report. The pupils are now attaining levels that are expected nationally of pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. These improvements are largely the result of better teaching, more classroom support for pupils, and a better-designed scheme of work. The pupils are now given more opportunities to plan investigations, design their own experiments and experiment with a wider range of resources. The impact of these measures is seen clearly in the improvement in the school's results in the most recent national tests for eleven year olds.

83. By the time they are seven, the pupils build simple electrical circuits and explain how bulbs can be made to light up. They know that electricity can be dangerous, and they understand the need for safety rules. When they study the life cycle of the butterfly, they acquire a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of how some animals grow, move, feed and reproduce. When they study materials, the pupils develop an appropriate understanding of how some substances change when they are heated or cooled. They talk sensibly of what they have learned about healthy food, and they successfully describe their own favourite foods. The younger pupils talk confidently about how they use their senses, and they use appropriate terms to name the parts of the body. They ask sensible questions during their investigations, and they discuss their work enthusiastically during group activities. Some pupils, however, find it difficult to predict what might happen in their experimental work.

84. When the younger Key Stage 2 pupils work with magnets, they are able to state which materials are magnetic and say something about the properties of the magnets they use. Many of the pupils understand the need for fair tests in their investigations. They are beginning to record their work using appropriate scientific terms. However, many pupils do not draw appropriate conclusions from their findings, or give clear explanations of what they have learned. The Year 4 pupils recognise that different animals live in different places and describe what makes them particularly suited to a certain kind of environment. The Year 5 pupils learn the parts of a flower when they dissect plants to find out more about the process of pollination and fertilisation. Most of the Year 6 pupils understand the concept of micro-organisms and how they cause disease and decay. They learn how mould grows and what conditions are needed to prevent it. Many of the pupils, throughout the key stage, carry out investigations and are beginning to give reasons why their predictions are proved correct or not. Many, however, have difficulty in recording their work in ways that make it clear what it is they have learned.

85. The quality of teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory but it is satisfactory overall. In the most effective lessons, the learning objectives are clear and the tasks are well matched to the needs of the pupils. The teachers explanations are clear so that pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of the pupils. For example, in a very good Year 5 lesson on flowering plants, the pupils were asked to explain and relate, in detail, the functions of each part of the flower. The teaching provided good opportunities for the pupils to record their work in different ways. As a result, the quality of learning was high. However, some teachers do not always challenge the pupils' understanding by giving them opportunities to develop independence and some of the more advanced learning skills such as setting up and testing hypotheses. Some teachers have occasional difficulty managing the pupils. When this happens, the pace of learning slows and the pupils make less progress than they should. Nevertheless, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, as do those who are learning to be bilingual. Although there are still too many occasions when the teaching does not fully challenge the higher attaining pupils, overall standards and progress are improving.

86. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator controls an annual budget, scrutinises planning, organises resources and implements an annual action plan. Although she has assisted the senior management team in monitoring and evaluating the teaching and learning, she is not sufficiently involved in the process, or in the implementation of the resulting action plan. Resources for science are satisfactory but some are not used sufficiently well to support learning. For example, the outside area and the two quad areas within the school are not well used as resource areas for scientific investigation, and the good information technology resources are insufficiently used to support the science curriculum. Although the pupils' attainment is assessed after each module of work and in annual tests, the results of the assessments are not being used consistently across the school to track the progress of each pupil or to inform the planning of work that matches their individual needs – particularly for those who are among the higher attaining pupils. The teachers set targets for pupils but these sometimes underestimate the pupils' abilities.

ART AND DESIGN

87. The pupils reach the expected standard by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. These findings are similar to those of the previous inspection. The scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that

most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in using what they learn to create attractive pieces of work.

88. In both key stages, the pupils make effective use of opportunities to draw what they see, using a variety of media. They make satisfactory progress: this can be seen in the increasing amount of detail the pupils include in sketches, and in the increasing use they make of more sophisticated techniques such as tone and shading to create their own styles. They also create abstract designs using chalk, different pastels, pencils and paint. The pupils' ideas become more complex and their work shows greater awareness of shade and colour co-ordination by the end of Key Stage 2. The pupils experiment with line, shape and texture when they draw and paint. They study and compare the styles of famous artists such as Giuseppe Arcumboldo, Picasso, Escher and Lowry. They use what they learn from a study of these artists in their own compositions. The pupils in Year1 study houses during environmental walks. They express their ideas well using pencils and paint, and plan how their work can be used to help them design and make three-dimensional models. The Year 2 pupils use the computer effectively to extend their understanding and appreciation of colour and pattern. When they draw landscapes, natural objects and portraits, the pupils develop satisfactory skills in colour mixing in a range of media, including paint and pastels. For example, the Year 5 pupils produced high quality results when they made individual sketches based on their observations of the patterns of William Morris. The pupils are increasingly confident in the way they use colour washes, block and sponge prints and finger painting to express their responses. The pupils in Year 4 explore pattern well in their still-life sketches, using shading to show variety in tone. This idea is extended further in Year 6 when the pupils explore how to make every-day objects look solid by their use of tone and shade. The work the pupils do in ceramics is of a particularly high standard. This area of learning is enhanced by the careful way the teachers plan clay work activities to help the pupils develop a range of key skills.

89. The quality of teaching is often good, and some of it is very good, particularly in Year 6. The lessons are well planned and have clear learning objectives that are linked to the particular skills to be taught. The teaching in these lessons often challenges the pupils to develop their own responses when observing the work of famous artists or when using different media for a range of effects. In both key stages, the teachers provide the pupils with a good range of opportunities to express their responses to the natural and built environments. This makes the pupils eager to describe their ideas and experiences. Their enthusiasm is obvious when they discuss their finished products, or when they share design plans. The teachers, therefore, help the pupils to be proud of their achievements and co-operate well when sharing materials and resources. They create useful links with other subjects such as, English, history and geography. The teachers make appropriate use of information technology to help the pupils develop an understanding of shape, colour and composition. The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of opportunities for the pupils to appreciate the similarities and differences in artwork from different times and cultures, including art from China, Japan, Africa, ancient Egypt and Rome, as well as the art of indigenous Americans and Australians. However, in some lessons the teachers missed opportunities to enrich the pupils' appreciation of these traditions.

90. The co-ordinator has updated the scheme of work and compiled useful portfolios of photographs and samples of work to assist the teachers in assessing their pupils' progress. The co-ordinator helps the school to provide opportunities for the pupils to experiment and evaluate aspects of three-dimensional art, individually and as members of a group. The annual Arts Week is well used for this, and for giving pupils a chance to work alongside artists, crafts people and designers.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

91. The standards reached at the end of both key stages are below national expectations: only the higher attaining pupils attain the expected level. However, the school has recently implemented changes to the planning and provision of the subject that are bearing fruit. There are signs that, in the most recent work, the pupils are attaining a higher standard than was attained in previous years.

92. By the time the pupils are seven, they produce simple designs in preparation for making puppets, but some of them have difficulty labelling them. The pupils made satisfactory use of guide sheets provided by the teacher to help them evaluate and modify their designs. Many of the pupils do not easily retain and use an appropriate set of technical terms in their work. This hinders their ability to describe their learning. By eleven, the pupils know enough about the design process and the use of materials to attempt to produce controllable vehicles. Although some complete work to an acceptable standard, many do not finish their models so cannot test and evaluate them. A scrutiny of completed work shows that the pupils cover all the required elements of the curriculum. They carry out investigations, produce designs and make artefacts, but the quality of the work they produce is, overall, not of a high enough standard. This is because the skills they acquire are not established well enough, and the oldest pupils still need a lot of help and guidance from their teachers. They are not sufficiently able to manage and conduct the whole process, from design to finished article, in a systematic and methodical manner. Although the pupils discuss, plan, design and make things together, they do not have sufficient opportunity to consolidate the skills they need.

93. The quality of teaching and learning ranges from good to unsatisfactory, but is satisfactory overall. At its best, the teaching sets appropriate challenges for pupils to investigate materials and solve design problems. Pupils respond to such challenges with enthusiasm. For example, the pupils in year 5 were fascinated by examples of movable toys and excited at the prospect of making them. They were well motivated to solve problems when designing mechanisms to enable their models to move. When making frames, however, the pupils in this same age group were not sufficiently helped by the teaching to make accurate measurements or choose the most appropriate materials. Hence, the finished articles lacked precision. The Year 6 pupils worked conscientiously when investigating materials in the construction of shelters and obviously enjoyed the practical activity. These pupils benefited from the presence of extra assistants. There was only one unsatisfactory lesson. The teaching in it was unsatisfactory because it lacked pace and rigour. As a result, some of the pupils lost interest and took too casual an approach to their work. They made errors that were not spotted and corrected. Sometimes the teaching fails to provide sufficient opportunities for the pupils to investigate for themselves how products are made. For example, in a Key Stage 1 lesson on puppet-making, the teacher gave the pupils sufficient opportunity to look at a variety of glove puppets, but did not give them a chance sufficiently early on in the lesson to investigate for themselves how they were constructed and used. The way the teachers mark the pupils' work has improved, so that pupils often receive worthwhile evaluative comments that set targets for future development. In consultation with their teachers, many pupils are now beginning to assess their own learning and record the progress they make.

94. The subject co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's approach to the subject. She has designed a way of assessing what pupils can do that will aid the long term monitoring of standards. She has compiled samples of the pupils' work, but these are not yet levelled by attainment to help the teachers assess the progress made by their own pupils. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection because the

school uses national guidelines more effectively to help teachers focus on the teaching the necessary skills in ways that help the pupils to build systematically on what they have already learned. This is helping to raise standards, but has not yet had sufficient time to have a significant impact them.

GEOGRAPHY

95. The standards that the pupils attain in geography do not meet national expectations although there are indications that they are improving. This is mainly because some aspects of the curriculum are not taught in sufficient depth. For example, until recently, important aspects, such as mapping skills, have not been given sufficient emphasis to enable the pupils to reach an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding. The improvements in curricular content and planning that have been implemented recently are leading to higher standards, but these have not yet had time to make a significant impact.

96. The higher attaining pupils reach standards that are in line with national expectations and make satisfactory progress. In Year 2, the pupils compare their local environment with a contrasting one when they study a farm and learn to observe similarities and differences. Their understanding is enhanced when they visit a farm where they can practise basic field study skills. The pupils know how to keep a weather diary and have a satisfactory understanding of how the weather affects human activity. The pupils learn some simple mapping skills when they locate places on maps. Nevertheless, the pupils' mapping skills are unsatisfactory. The Year 6 pupils interviewed demonstrated a weak understanding how to use map references. The quality of most of the pupils' recorded work does not meet expected standards: the pupils have insufficient writing skills to support effective learning, and they do not acquire and retain, sufficiently well, a useful range of geographical terms and ideas. In discussions, the oldest pupils demonstrate an awkwardness of expression brought about by a limited understanding and use of appropriate geographical language. They sometimes confuse historical and geographical information. By Year 6, however, the pupils have experienced an appropriate range of activities that includes a study of the local area and some contrasting areas elsewhere in the United Kingdom and abroad. They know about some important ecological issues and acquire a satisfactory knowledge of man's adverse impact on the environment. The pupils make good use of information technology to support their learning.

97. Throughout the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning was consistently satisfactory. In lessons at Key Stage 1, for example, the teachers carefully prepared activities for the pupils and successfully guided them in learning new skills. Some pupils, who became quite restless during practical activities, were well managed by the teachers so that other pupils' learning was not unduly interrupted. The teaching at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall. In the most effective lessons, the teachers prepare work carefully and help their pupils to learn by leading them systematically through the subject matter. Most of the time, the teaching provides the pupils with a suitably organised and managed set of learning activities that encourage them to work well and respond to questions. However, the teaching does not always ensure that what is taught is successfully retained. This was demonstrated in a lesson in which Year 4 pupils found it difficult to locate Egypt on a world map. Sometimes the prepared materials, although satisfactory, are not stimulating enough to have a positive impact on the pupils' learning. In the most effective lessons, the pupils' interest significantly rose when teachers presented them with artefacts from the countries of origin. Most of the pupils, in response to questions from their teachers, are able to identify a range of sources of information, such as books, places of interest, libraries, videos and the Internet. Not all

teachers, however, use approaches to the study of distant localities that make effective use of the available resources to capture pupils' attention and imagination, and to promote a better understanding of the countries and areas studied. In the lessons in when the teaching fails to interest the pupils, the behaviour of some pupils sometimes falls below the high standards expected of them. The way the teachers mark pupils' work has improved since the last inspection, and the best of it is of a high standard. For example, where the pupils are given the opportunity to develop research skills by carrying out their own projects, the teachers' comments are helpful as well as encouraging.

98. The management of the subjects is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has reviewed the curriculum and has begun the process of improving standards by helping the teachers to develop a coherent and relevant set of learning experiences. She has carried out useful monitoring to help the school evaluate its progress towards meeting its targets.

HISTORY

99. The standards the pupils attain are in line with national expectations. The pupils make sound progress and enjoy learning about the past. Standards at the school are similar to those reported at the last inspection.

100. In Key Stage 1, the pupils understand how Victorian household appliances are different from those of today. They compare Victorian dolly tubs to modern washing machines, and flat irons to modern electrical irons. Most of the pupils understand how appliances today rely on electricity. The pupils link this work with work on electricity in science lessons. The Year 1 pupils know about the expeditions of Captain Scott, and the Year 2 pupils use information technology sources to support their work in on Grace Darling and on The Great Plague of 1665.

101. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 2 know about the Anglo Saxons and the various invasions and settlements that followed. The Year 4 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the Tudors monarchs and of everyday life in Tudor times. Some of the pupils develop good investigational skills. The Year 5 pupils acquire a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the Victorians. They compare their own school with a Victorian school, using sources of information such as photographs and artefacts very well. Many pupils in this year group develop independent research skills. The Year 6 pupils know about the ancient African civilisation of Benin. They also gain a good understanding of some aspects of life during the Second World War by listening to a guest speaker who was an evacuee.

102. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good features in Year 5 and Year 6. The teachers' subject knowledge is secure and they present their work in interesting ways. They often use probing questions that guide the pupils to draw their own conclusions. The teachers make effective use of learning resources. For example, the Year 5 pupils are taught to use Victorian photographs and artefacts very effectively to gain knowledge and understanding of the period. The teachers of Year 6 pupils provide good opportunities for the pupils to extend their learning of the Second World War by asking carefully prepared questions of visiting speakers. The teachers make effective use of displays of work in Key Stage 2 to demonstrate features studied in history. For example interesting displays of work on the Victorians and on the Second World War illustrate what pupils are about to learn and investigate. One of the strengths of the teaching is the way the teachers use information technology to support the pupils' learning. They use scanned images and digital photographs very well, for example, to provide good quality resources to support work on the Egyptians.

The teachers in Years 3 and 4 use the Internet effectively to provide research material on the Vikings and the Tudors.

103. The co-ordinator for history provides a satisfactory level of support to other teachers, helping them with resources and information. She ensures that visits are made to local places, including the Stourbridge glass-works and the local Black Country museums, to support the pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

104. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, the pupils attain standards in information technology that match national expectations. In the last inspection, the pupils' attainment at the age of eleven was considered to be below average. The school has worked hard to improve standards: its careful investment in hardware and staff training has resulted in increased opportunities for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, to improve their knowledge and skills. As a result, most of the pupils are now making satisfactory progress and some are making good progress.

105. At the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' attainment is broadly average. The pupils have good mouse and keyboard skills. They know basic word processing functions, and many can print out and save their work. Most of the pupils know how to change the font and size of the text. Some of them can use a paint programme to draw simple patterns and pictures. The pupils are beginning to use computer skills to support work in other subjects. For example, the Year 2 pupils use the Internet to find out historical information on the Great Fire of London. However, many of the pupils lack confidence in using the computer independently.

106. The attainment of the pupils by the end of Year 6 matches what is expected nationally for their age. A few pupils achieve standards above this level and make good progress. In Year 3, the pupils create databases for recording the number of legs on different animals and insects. They use the Internet to research their work on the Vikings. Most of the pupils know how to log on to the Internet, find the correct website and select appropriate images to download for printing. The Year 4 pupils understand and use 'drop-down' menus in graphics and other programs. They save and retrieve pictures and explore a range of tools. The Year 5 pupils use menus and icons independently. They create databases to produce weather statistics and use spreadsheets to create food menus. The Year 6 pupils use *PowerPoint*, a powerful multimedia program, to create attractive presentations that include graphics, art, sound and movement. They use computers to set up control experiments and use the Internet effectively to research their work on the ancient civilisation of Benin in West Africa.

107. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There is some good teaching, particularly when the teachers have access to the facilities in the computer suite. Here the teachers ensure that all of the pupils are clear about what they will learn in lessons and provide the pupils with interesting and challenging activities. In the most effective lessons, the teaching is characterised by good use of demonstration so that all the pupils understand what to do. In a lesson with the Year 6 lesson pupils, for example, the teacher made good use of the projector and white board to illustrate teaching points in a way that helped all of the pupils to understand the task. The teachers also give the pupils many opportunities to work independently at practising their skills and at solving problems for themselves. There are no significant weaknesses in the teaching. Occasionally, however, the teachers fail to ensure that

the learning support assistants delegated to help the pupils on classroom computers have sufficient knowledge to be effective. Where they do not, the pupils do not always make enough progress.

108. Since the last inspection, the co-ordinator has introduced a new scheme of work and identified gaps in learning and teaching that need to be addressed. The school has recently introduced a useful way of assessing what skills the pupils have been taught. This is helping teachers to identify what needs to be done next to further raise standards of attainment. The teachers are involved in focussed programmes of in-service training. The Year 5 and Year 6 teachers, for example, have extra input on the control aspect of information technology.

109. The way the school uses the new computer suite and the associated networked computers in classroom bases is having a positive impact upon standards and progress. The suite is well used by Key Stage 2 pupils but not yet by Key Stage 1 classes. The purchase of additional resources, such as the interactive whiteboard and a digital camera, are also helping to raise the profile of the subject. Information technology is used well to support some other areas of the curriculum. The Year 5 pupils use a commercial teaching programme to boost their literacy skills. Teachers use the Internet to further pupils' research skills in their work on the Victorians, the Tudors and other periods in history. The school needs to develop the use of information technology to support science.

MUSIC

110. The pupils attain the standards expected for their age at both key stages, and most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. The younger pupils systematically learn the names of a wide range of both tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments. The pupils in Year 2 are able to distinguish between a tambour and a tambourine and to determine the range of sounds that can be achieved using hard and soft beaters. In a good lesson in Year 3, the pupils were encouraged to create their own music after listening to some Viking battle chants. They were able to make satisfactory use of a suitable range of instruments to recreate the sounds of battle. When they performed their pieces, the pupils used tempo and rhythm well to create the effect they desired. The older pupils record their musical pieces on scores, using symbols they devise for themselves. The pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have access to brass tuition. The pupils who take advantage of the opportunity to learn an instrument do well because the tuition provided is of high quality. This enhances the music provision for the more able pupils, who quickly learn to play and read music.

111. The pupils learn a suitable repertoire of songs and hymns. They sing well in lessons and in assemblies. The school provides a number of opportunities for the pupils to use their skills in performances. It has, for example, a school choir and a school band. The pupils are encouraged to demonstrate their musical talents at events such as the annual talent show. All of the pupils take part in the Christmas production, and pupils in each year group lead an assembly once each term. However, the pupils do not have a sufficient knowledge or understanding of music from other cultures because there are too few opportunities for pupils to explore and enjoy it.

112. The quality of teaching is good overall. The teachers make effective use of a variety of starting points for pupils' music, linking it skilfully to other subjects, such as history. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and are good at organising and

controlling pupils. As a result, the pupils are well behaved and work with enthusiasm and enjoyment. The teachers plan a curriculum for music that is broad and that encourages pupils throughout the school to get involved in making music. However, they do not plan sufficiently well for the pupils to experience a wide enough range of music from other cultures. The learning opportunities are supplemented with live musical performances by visiting musicians. Recent performances have included 'A Musical Story' of strings, brass and woodwind instruments. The teachers have developed links with a local secondary school. This has provided a number of opportunities for the pupils to benefit from the experience of older pupils. For example, the pupils enjoyed listening to Latin American music performed by pupils from the local secondary school. There is a regular lunchtime music club. This is extremely popular because it provides opportunities for the pupils to make simple instruments, listen to music and learn about a variety of instruments.

113. The subject is satisfactorily managed. To-date there has been no formal monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in music, but this is planned for later in the year. However, there is some informal monitoring of the subject, done largely through discussion with teachers. The co-ordinator has led a number of successful demonstration lessons that have helped the teachers to improve their knowledge and understanding of the subject. Further support is planned for next year and is identified in the Education Action Zone development plan.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. The inspection took place very early in the school year, but the available evidence from lesson observations and teachers' planning indicates that the pupils are likely to attain the standards expected of them for their age. The standards the pupils attain are similar to those at the time of the last inspection.

115. By the end of Year 2, it is likely that the pupils will reach appropriate standards in dance, gymnastics and games. In gymnastics, for example, they readily explore simple skills, such as linking changes of speed with changes of direction, with a fair degree of control. They know how to perform a range of actions safely. In games, the pupils have made a good start on learning how to send and receive balls and beanbags accurately. They are beginning to understand how to help their team keep possession by moving into unmarked spaces. In dance lessons, they make up simple sequences of movements to the sound of percussion instruments. The pupils know that it is important to prepare sensibly for vigorous exercise by participating in suitable warm-up activities. They understand the effects of exercise on the body. For example, they monitor the changes in their heart rates before and after strenuous activities and discuss what they discover.

116. By the end Year 6, the pupils are likely to reach the expected standard in dance, games, gymnastics and swimming. In games, for example, they attain an appropriate grasp of the rules and positions for netball, rugby and hockey. They are beginning to apply the principles of attack and defence in their games and use the skills of marking players, passing, dribbling and shooting. In gymnastics work, the pupils successfully use apparatus to help them increase the range of movements when climbing, rolling, swinging and jumping as they move on, off, over and around apparatus. Although no dance work was observed at Year 6, the standard of work attained by the pupils in Year 5 suggests that nearly all of the pupils are likely to reach the expected level of performance by the end of the key stage. The pupils demonstrate a good

awareness of health and safety issues related to vigorous exercise. For example, they use equipment and apparatus sensibly, and they always do suitable warm-up and cool-down activities before and after vigorous exercise. A substantial proportion of the pupils are able to swim twenty-five metres by they age of eleven.

117. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. The teachers plan their lessons well to include activities that challenge the pupils and help them to evaluate what they do. As a result, the pupils quickly expand the range and quality of the skills they use. One of the strengths of the teaching is the way the teachers share the learning objectives with the pupils and provide them with good opportunities to evaluate how well they are meeting them. In a Year 2 gymnastics lesson on 'pathways', for example, the teacher helped the pupils to make good progress in identifying different routes across the hall. She explained clearly what was expected, provided good demonstrations, offered useful feedback on how well the activities were going, and encouraged the pupils to reflect on what they did. This helped the pupils to think more deeply about how they could improve their performance.

118. Another strength of the teaching is the pace and challenging nature of the activities. These help the pupils to make good progress because they ensure that all of the pupils benefit from vigorous exercise as they acquire new skills. This was very clearly demonstrated in lessons on hockey and dance at Key Stage 2. In a hockey lesson, for example, the pupils were expected to work quickly and accurately at new skills in controlling the ball. Many of the activities were timed to encourage pupils to concentrate well. In a dance lesson, the pupils learned a demanding sequence of steps and actions to fit a fast piece of contemporary popular music. Another strength of the teaching arises out of the good relationships between the teachers and the pupils. As a result, the pupils listen carefully and work hard to improve their skills. Some of the teaching is marked by the teachers' obvious enthusiasm for the subject. This was particularly so in a dance lesson where the teacher's demonstrations inspired the pupils to master difficult steps.

119. Much of the teaching is characterised by good opportunities for pupils to learn by solving problems for themselves. In the dance lesson, for example, the pupils worked hard to create a sequence of movements from the characteristic steps used in hopscotch; in a hockey lesson, pupils were asked to evaluate which was the harder task – shooting between narrow goals or manoeuvring the ball around a series of obstacles. These activities encouraged the pupils to become aware of their own learning and helped them to improve what they could do. A significant feature of all of the teaching was the good level of class control before, during and after the lessons. As a result, the pupils behaved very well and worked hard to achieve good results. Although there are no significant weaknesses in the teaching, there are occasions when teachers do not provide the pupils with sufficient guidance. In one lesson, for example, the pupils were not shown how to cup their hands when catching a ball. In another, the teacher did not make explicit the beginning and end points of the routes the pupils were to take across the hall. This led some pupils become uncertain about how best to vary their activities to show the full range of what they could do.

120. The subject is managed effectively. The co-ordinator works closely with colleagues to provide suitable materials to help them plan useful and challenging lessons. She has established useful links with other schools that support the teaching very effectively. The school provides a satisfactory range of opportunities for its pupils to participate in inter-school competitions.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

121. The teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection, and are broadly in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus.

122. By the end of Year 2, the pupils have a satisfactory understanding of celebrations in a number of faiths, but predominantly Islam and Christianity. They talk sensibly about the importance of having rules to guide our actions and how we should treat each other. By the age of eleven most pupils, including those with special educational needs or English as an additional language, have a satisfactory understanding of places of religious worship. They participate in informed discussions on the similarities and differences between Islam and Christianity, and they have a growing awareness of the key features of a number of other world religions including Judaism, Hinduism and Sikhism. Pupils have a clear understanding of many Christian ceremonies and are able to discuss the relevance of, for example, the baptism service.

123. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Most of the teachers plan lessons well to ensure that the teaching covers a balanced educational programme. However, some teachers' subject knowledge is not fully secure and, as a result, some aspects of the subject get overlooked. One of the strengths of the teaching is the effective way the teachers use the available resources, including religious artefacts, to promote the pupils' learning. The teachers employ a variety of ways to help strengthen the pupils' understanding and maintain their interest. In a good lesson in Year 4, the teacher explored the idea of 'faith'. She used skilful questioning and got the pupils to act out situations that helped them explore what it means to believe in something. The pupils were helped to understand that faith does not depend upon proof in terms of verifiable facts, but upon a different kind of understanding that we term 'spiritual'. The teacher successfully used the story of *Daniel in the Lions Den* to illustrate the meaning of faith. The discussion that followed was well used by the teacher to help the pupils to deepen their understanding of what it means to make a spiritual response and to be committed. Some of the Moslem pupils are very keen to talk about their faith and religion. The school encourages the sharing of beliefs, and teachers skilfully incorporate opportunities for this sharing of ideas into their lesson plans. The teachers make satisfactory use of local resources, particularly the local church and mosque. The school also maintains useful links with two national charities.

124. The subject is satisfactorily managed. The senior management team, with the help of the subject co-ordinator, monitors the teaching and what the pupils learn. The co-ordinator has collated samples of the work pupils do so that teachers can match what the pupils achieve with what is expected of them in the Programme of Study for religious education in the local syllabus. The school uses stories in its assemblies to illustrate moral issues. This contributes to learning in religious education lessons. The co-ordinator is aware that not all of the teachers have secure subject knowledge. She has, therefore, drawn up plans to introduce the new locally agreed syllabus and provide teachers with appropriate training later in the year.

