

INSPECTION REPORT

ALBERT PRITCHARD INFANT SCHOOL

Wednesbury

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 103906

Headteacher: Jane Burns

Reporting inspector: Michael Best
10413

Dates of inspection: 4th to 7th February 2002

Inspection number: 222107

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 nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 7 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Crew Road
Wednesbury
West Midlands
Postcode: WS10 9QG

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Dawn Winter

Date of previous inspection: 6th March 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Dr Michael Best 10413	Registered inspector	Science Design and technology Music Religious education	Characteristics of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught? How well the school is led and managed What the school should do to improve further
Mrs Pat Edwards 10965	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values & personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
Mrs Trudy Cotton 3751	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Equality of opportunity English History Geography Special educational needs	
Mrs Margaret Leah 22740	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Information and communication technology Physical education	The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
Mrs Christine Richardson 22058	Team inspector	Nursery Assessment Unit, Enhanced Provision	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Albert Pritchard Infant School is an average sized school situated between Wednesbury and Walsall. The local authority built homes in the area in the 1930s and, although many are now owner-occupied, a proportion continues to be rented. Many parents have part-time jobs in service industries. Currently, there are 237 pupils on roll, 114 boys and 123 girls. Sixty-three children attend the nursery on a part-time basis. Thirty-one pupils (18 per cent) receive free school meals, but the school believes that the number eligible is higher. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs¹ (28 per cent) is above the national average. Pupils have a range of needs.

The school provides assessment places for nursery-aged children and places for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders throughout the school. The proportion of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need is well above the national average. About 9 per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic groups. A similar proportion speaks English as an additional language, but none are at the early stages of second language acquisition. The predominant mother tongue is Bengali.

Children enter the nursery at the beginning of the term following their third birthday, attending for morning or afternoon sessions. They transfer to the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they are five, attending all day. Simple tests given to pupils shortly after they start in the nursery show that their skills are generally much lower than those found nationally. Speaking and listening skills are particularly low. At the time of the inspection, most children in the nursery were three years old and those in the reception classes four.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school that has successfully addressed the serious weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. The strong and purposeful leadership of the new headteacher, together with the support of the governors and the hard work of the staff, is moving this school forward. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the education provided for pupils is sound. Standards are rising and the high proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need make good progress. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The good leadership of the headteacher and governors is moving the school forward.
- Progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science is improving.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school makes good provision for children in the nursery assessment unit and pupils with autistic spectrum disorders.
- Pupils' attitudes to school and relationships between adults and pupils are very good.
- The school keeps parents very well informed about their children's progress.
- Teachers' management of pupils is good.

What could be improved

- Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are not yet high enough at the end of Year 2 in comparison with national averages.
- The small steps in learning planned for children in the Foundation Stage are not clear enough.
- Speaking and listening skills throughout the school are too low.
- The use of assessment information to help teachers plan their lessons.
- The monitoring of teaching, learning and progress.

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

¹ Stages of special educational needs range from Stage 1, when limited additional support is provided for pupils entirely from within the school, to Stage 5, which ensures that a pupil has a statement outlining his or her needs and shows what additional and specific support that pupil will receive. Stages 3, 4 and 5 involve external specialists as well as staff within the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in March 2000. Although it provided an acceptable standard of education, serious weaknesses were identified in the leadership and management of the school and in the quality of teaching. The present headteacher was seconded to the school in October 2000 and appointed to the headship in September 2001 following the retirement of the previous headteacher. In March 2001, Additional Inspectors judged that reasonable progress was being made in addressing the key issues of the last report.

Much has been put in place in a relatively short time and the impact of these changes is starting to come through. The new headteacher has successfully identified where improvements and changes are required. She has had to take some difficult decisions, particularly to do with the deployment and responsibilities of teaching staff, in order to move the school forward. The school now has a manageable leadership structure and a governing body that is both keen and willing to be involved in the school. Performance management has been introduced and is being effectively used to develop teaching and learning. The headteacher, literacy and numeracy co-ordinators, and local educational authority advisers regularly monitor teaching. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during this inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
Reading	C	C	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	B	E	E	C	
Mathematics	D	D	E	D	

In 2001, Year 2 pupils' results in reading, writing and mathematics were well below the national average. The proportion of pupils in each year group with statements of special educational need varies from year to year. In this particular year group, the proportion of pupils with statements was six times the national average. Compared with similar schools, results were average in writing and just below average in reading and mathematics. Over time, results are broadly rising in line with the national picture. The school is starting to set sharper targets for pupils to achieve.

Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress. Many children make good progress in the development of their knowledge and understanding of the world as a result of the varied experiences provided by the school. Similarly, many children make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills because of their very low starting point when they enter school. However, standards are still below average when they enter Year 1.

Standards during the inspection in Year 2 were below those expected nationally in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. The progress made by pupils in these subjects is satisfactory and, in the development of literacy skills, often good. In the non-core subjects², standards are broadly similar to those expected for pupils of this age and progress is satisfactory. Standards in religious education are similar to those outlined in the locally agreed syllabus and progress is satisfactory. Pupils with statements of special educational need make good progress. This is because of the good support they receive from staff, who also support those pupils for whom English is an additional language in making satisfactory progress.

² The non-core subjects are art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils work hard and try to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour is good both in classes and in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are very good. Pupils willingly take responsibility when given the opportunity.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Lessons start promptly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	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 overall quality of teaching seen in the school during the inspection is satisfactory. The Foundation Stage staff promote a very caring and supportive atmosphere. They plan activities leading to the Early Learning Goals, but they do not use the 'Stepping Stones for Learning'³ sufficiently to identify small enough steps in learning. Good support is provided for children in the nursery assessment unit.

Teaching is good in English and satisfactory in mathematics in Years 1 and 2. Teaching and learning of the basic skills are good in literacy and are evident across the curriculum. Skills in numeracy and information and communication technology are soundly taught, but teachers do not consistently plan their application across the curriculum. Teaching during the inspection was good in science, in art and design and in music. The expertise of specialists from the Wednesbury Education Action Zone is helping to raise standards. Teaching is satisfactory in the other subjects, including religious education.

Teachers' management of pupils is good across the school. Pupils are interested in learning, but their concentration is limited and their speaking and listening skills low. Satisfactory assessment procedures are in place and the school is starting to develop collections of work to help teachers check on the standards of work that pupils produce. Teachers do not make enough use of the available information in order to match learning to pupils' needs, particularly those who have average or nearly average levels of attainment. Support staff make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning, particularly for those pupils who have statements of special educational need. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported satisfactorily. Teachers make satisfactory use of homework. Pupils and parents are happy with the amount of work set.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a satisfactory range of opportunities for learning. Careful planning ensures that all pupils have full access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs work well towards the targets set for their learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Pupils from different groups are welcomed in the school. No pupils are at the early stages of second language acquisition. They make satisfactory progress.

³ The Stepping Stones for Learning are the steps in learning leading to the Early Learning Goals.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. Spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Provision for moral and social development is good, enabling pupils to achieve good standards of behaviour and regard for others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. The school provides well for the welfare of pupils. The use of assessment information is underdeveloped.

The partnership with parents is good. The school makes good provision for children in the Nursery Assessment Unit and for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership that is successfully moving the school forward. The management of special educational needs is good. Other aspects of leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff are working hard to address the challenges of the new responsibilities they have recently assumed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	All statutory requirements are met. The governors have good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school improvement plan is good and points the way forward for the school. The systematic monitoring of teaching and learning is at an early stage of development.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school effectively applies the principles of 'best value' and is working hard to address outstanding staffing issues resulting from the planned reduction in the school's admission number.

There is a good number of suitably qualified teaching and support staff. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, but there are issues to be resolved in the nursery. Learning resources are satisfactory. There are no clear criteria agreed between the school and the local education authority about the ongoing placement of children in the Nursery Assessment Unit and pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Fifteen parents attended a meeting with inspectors shortly before the inspection. Thirty-eight parents (16 per cent) returned pre-inspection questionnaires.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school. • Behaviour is good. • Staff are approachable. • Staff care well for pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra-curricular activities.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views of the school, but feel that the range of activities provided outside lessons is satisfactory for children of this age. Parents expressed a range of opinions about the amount of homework given to pupils. Inspectors feel the amount is satisfactory for pupils' ages.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The inspection took place during the spring term. Inspectors looked at the information collected by teachers when children first enter the school, and the results of statutory National Curriculum tests and assessments taken by pupils at the ages of seven. They also looked at the results of non-statutory tests and the school's analyses of and predictions for pupils' attainment. Inspectors looked at pupils' work and talked with them to help them judge how much pupils know and can do.

The Foundation Stage⁴

2. Children enter the nursery at the start of the term following their third birthday. Simple checks show that they achieve well below the levels expected for their age in all the areas of experience. Their communication and language skills are particularly low, with many children using gestures to communicate. Others use only a limited range of words and they often speak in single words. Many children concentrate for only brief periods of time. Nevertheless, many children make good progress and begin to listen and respond to others.
3. In their personal, social and emotional development, few seek out others to share experiences, work in a group or take turns. In their mathematical development, most children have an interest in numbers and counting, but do not use number language. They have little experience of shapes and most have a limited understanding of mathematical terms.
4. Simple tests at the start of reception show that, despite the progress made in the nursery, children are still attaining below the expected levels for their age. The majority are not expected to achieve the Early Learning Goals⁵ in any of the areas of experience by the end of the Foundation Stage.
5. Staff in the Foundation Stage encourage children to listen for increasing periods of time. They help children to speak in phrases and sentences and to use the correct names for objects. Early reading and mark-making activities introduce children to written language. In mathematics, children are encouraged to recognise numbers, sort and match similar objects and name shapes. As they get older, they start to recognise patterns in mathematics and to count on and back.
6. Many children make good progress in the development of their knowledge and understanding of the world because of the good range of activities staff provide to widen children's restricted pre-school experiences. In the other areas of experience, children make satisfactory progress. In children's physical development, staff do not systematically monitor the progress made in outdoor experiences to ensure that children experience a full range of equipment.
7. The Foundation Stage provides a very caring start to children's education. However, teachers are not using the 'Stepping Stones for Learning' clearly enough in their planning to build upon what children have previously learned and understood. It is not always clear how the progress children make in the nursery is built upon in the reception classes.

⁴ The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and finishes at the end of the reception class. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

⁵ Early Learning Goals – these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage.

8. The children in the Nursery Assessment Unit have individual learning plans. Staff keep good records, and targets are reviewed and shared with all who work with the children. Progress is reviewed daily and targets adjusted as necessary.

Years 1 and 2 (Key Stage 1)

9. Pupils' results in the National Curriculum statutory tests and assessments in English, mathematics and science taken at the end of Year 2 have fluctuated in recent years. In the 2001 tests, the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2⁶ or higher was well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 3⁷ was below the national average in reading, similar to the national average in writing, but well below the national average in mathematics. Taking into account the context of the school, pupils' results were below average in reading and mathematics, and average in writing, in comparison with similar schools⁸.
10. In science, the proportion of pupils assessed by teachers as attaining Level 2 or higher was just below average, but the proportion assessed at the higher Level 3 was above average. There is a close match between teacher assessments and test results in writing, reading and mathematics.
11. Inspection evidence does not reveal any significant differences in the standards or progress of boys and girls. In the National Curriculum test results over the past three years, there is little difference between boys and girls in reading and writing, but boys are about half a term ahead of the girls in mathematics. There are variations from year to year, but this happens with a relatively small number of pupils in each year group.
12. The proportion of higher attaining pupils in the school is less than that found in most schools and the proportion of lower attaining pupils is significantly greater. One of the reasons for this is the high proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need. In last year's Year 2 group, for example, this was six times the national average. Taking statemented pupils out of the year-on-year results, there is an underlying improvement, although results are still hovering below the national average.
13. On the basis of the work seen during the inspection, standards in Year 2 are below the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In speaking and listening, many pupils make significant progress given their very low starting point but even so, standards are still below average. Progress in these subjects is satisfactory, with some good gains in progress starting to show through as a result of the efforts made by the headteacher and colleagues to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
14. The focus that the headteacher has given to the development of literary skills is starting to bear fruit not only in the quality of pupils' reading and writing, but also in other subjects. The decision to adapt the National Literacy Strategy to teach and develop reading separately is effective. Pupils' skills in literacy are improving and they are being encouraged to apply them in different areas of the curriculum. Teachers often draw pupils' attention to notices or ask them to read out key vocabulary from cards. Good examples of this were seen in science and religious education. Numeracy skills are also improving due to the recent emphasis on developing pupils' mental mathematics and problem-solving skills. However, as yet there is less emphasis in teachers' planning on developing numeracy skills across the curriculum than there is with literacy skills. This is an area for future focus.

⁶ The National Curriculum is written on the basis that pupils are, by the end of Key Stage 1 when pupils are age 7, expected to reach Level 2.

⁷ If a pupil is attaining Level 3 then he or she is reaching standards above that expected for a child of his or her age.

⁸ The comparison is based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's benchmark information designed to compare end of key stage tests and assessments with those of similar schools nationally. Inspectors are able to vary this by one grade to more accurately reflect a school's particular circumstances.

15. Pupils learn skills in information and communication technology in subject lessons. At the present time, there are few opportunities planned for them to apply these skills across the curriculum. Staff are still undergoing training for this. Although the school is aware of the problem and is addressing it, pupils' progress in this application of skills is slow. The library has recently been re-organised. Research skills are developing, for example, in design and technology where pupils are encouraged to find out more about their design brief.
16. Overall, standards in the non-core subjects⁹ of art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information technology, music and physical education are similar to those expected of pupils at this age. In religious education, standards are similar to those expected in the locally agreed syllabus.
17. Pupils make satisfactory progress in these subjects. In physical education, this progress is sometimes uneven because the school does not have agreed arrangements for skill development.
18. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans as a result of the good support they receive from staff. The arrangements to fully include pupils in whole-class sessions enable pupils to make good progress in learning. Likewise, pupils for whom English is an additional language have adult support to ensure they understand what they have to do. There are no particular differences in the attainment and progress of pupils from minority ethnic groups. The school is aware that higher attaining pupils may also have specific needs and maintains a register of gifted and talented pupils.
19. Although pupils make steady progress in speaking and listening, they need to make much greater progress because the lack of these skills is holding them back in other work across the curriculum. The school is doing something about this. New arrangements for developing speaking and listening skills are now agreed, and teachers are just starting to put these into practice. For example, they are asking more questions that require pupils to think about what they are going to say in response, rather than having to give a 'yes' or 'no' answer. A feature of teaching at the time of the last inspection was the amount of time pupils spent sitting on the carpet listening to their teachers. Where this is addressed, a much greater amount of speaking and listening is going on, with pupils talking to each other and to adults about their work. This is making a good contribution to the development of these skills.
20. Teachers know their pupils well, but do not consistently track the progress individuals and groups of pupils make from lesson to lesson. Consequently, they do not consistently identify and meet specific needs. The work teachers give to higher and lower attaining pupils is usually well matched to their needs. However, work for pupils who are nearly achieving average levels, for example with their reading and writing, is not so well focused and so progress can vary. The headteacher has made a detailed analysis of the school's results and is using this information to set targets for future years. She is sharing this good practice with staff and governors and identifying areas for development. This is helping to focus subject co-ordinators' reviews of long-term plans.
21. The school has a small turnover of pupils from year to year. During the last academic year, three pupils joined the school other than at the usual time of admission and four pupils left before the end of Year 2. Many children who attend the Nursery Assessment Unit remain in the school once their assessment placement is over. There are no agreed

⁹ The non-core subjects are art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education.

criteria in place between the school and the local education authority to ensure that the school is the most appropriate setting for them.

22. The school has addressed the issues identified in the last report concerning unsatisfactory standards in geography, music and religious education. Standards in other subjects are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. In their responses to the questionnaires and in their comments to inspectors before the inspection, the vast majority of parents said they were pleased with the progress their children made in the school. A number of parents highlighted the improvements in standards and progress in the past 12 months.
23. In conjunction with the local education authority, the school sets targets for pupils to achieve in the Year 2 statutory tests in reading, writing and mathematics. These are challenging, but evidence from the inspection shows them to be achievable.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

24. Throughout the school, the attitude of pupils to their learning is good and in line with the findings of the previous report. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to attend. Parents are pleased with the progress their children make in their personal development.
25. In the Foundation Stage, children in the nursery are curious and work side by side in sand play activities. They are starting to understand right from wrong and to see how selfish actions can affect others. In the reception classes, children show initiative as they plan their work in creative experiences. They are proud of their printing and play dough models.
26. The school works hard to promote good attitudes in its pupils and is successful in achieving this aim. Pupils enjoy being involved in their work, as seen in a reception physical education lesson where pupils were enthusiastically practising different types of jump. They generally try hard in lessons.
27. Behaviour in class and the communal areas of the school is good. Pupils are courteous and treat staff, parents and visitors politely. They understand well the clear moral code. They show care for one another, their belongings and school property. No incidents of bullying were seen during the inspection. There were no exclusions during the last reporting year.
28. Relationships are good between staff and pupils, and between pupils. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds get on well with each other. They are supportive of those with special educational needs. Pupils like their teachers and feel they are cared for well. Relationships are open and friendly, and pupils feel comfortable when talking to adults. Pupils willingly accept responsibility and enjoy helping with the routines of class and school, such as plant-watering monitors, register monitors and classroom helpers. However, opportunities for pupils to take personal initiative and responsibility are greater in some classes than in others.
29. Attendance for the autumn term was broadly in line with the national average. This is an improvement on the attendance for the last reporting year. An outbreak of chicken pox depressed the figures for that period. The majority of pupils arrive within the time allowed for registration. This enables lessons to start on time and to continue without interruption.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

30. Taking into account all the available evidence, the overall quality of teaching and learning in the school is satisfactory. Teaching was good in nearly half of the 41 lessons observed

during the inspection. These judgements on teaching and learning draw upon a wide range of evidence gathered during the inspection as well as inspectors' classroom observations.

31. Teaching was good or better in 49 per cent of the lessons seen, and very good in seven per cent of lessons. No excellent, unsatisfactory, poor or very poor teaching was seen during the inspection. These statistics compare well with the last inspection when a significant amount of teaching was unsatisfactory. At that time, 44 per cent of lessons were good or better, but 19 per cent were unsatisfactory.

The Foundation Stage

32. The quality of teaching and learning in the nursery and reception classes is satisfactory. In 37 per cent of lessons, it was good. The staff teams in the nursery and reception classes consist of teachers, nursery nurses and learning support assistants. They work well together, each staff member having a 'family group' of children for registration and activities. Staff provide a high level of care for children. They have a sound understanding of how young children learn and know how to help them along the path to learning. Staff manage the children well and ensure that routines are followed. As a result, children are interested in the activities provided for them. Staff place good emphasis on teaching children to make choices. They use the 'task board' well to help children decide on what activities they will follow. Sometimes, however, children need more help in choosing what they do. This is particularly important in physical activities, where some children are inclined to restrict their choice to one piece of equipment.
33. Teachers' planning is satisfactory, but the way in which they plan and manage learning need to be improved. This will help children to meet the challenges of a wider range of activities. It will also help teachers to more easily monitor and assess the progress children make. There are pockets of good teaching and learning, but there needs to be a clearer focus in planning in all the areas of experience. At the moment, staff in the Foundation Stage are not using the 'Stepping Stones for Learning' sufficiently when they plan their lessons. As a result, children's learning does not always follow a progressive path, building upon what has been previously learned and understood. Following the 'Stepping Stones' from the nursery into the reception classes would also help to widen teachers' knowledge of the early years curriculum. It would also ensure that the progress made in the nursery is built upon in the reception classes.
34. Staff work hard to develop pupils' basic skills. Staff give good attention to developing speaking and listening skills and many children make good progress from a particularly low starting point. Teachers also provide children with different experiences to widen their otherwise restricted knowledge and understanding of the world. In both these areas, teachers are helping children to take part in learning and to concentrate for longer periods. Children willingly take part in activities, but many tire easily and find it difficult to stick at something without help. When they have jobs to do, most complete these sensibly. However, at times, children are not given enough opportunities to become more independent in, for example, getting out and tidying away the paints and aprons.
35. The staffs' expectations of children's behaviour are good. Their expectations of what children know and can do are satisfactory. They could be more accurate, and thus challenging, if the 'Stepping Stones' were used more rigorously in planning the next steps in learning. Staff know the children well, but they do not always use the good information they gather sufficiently well to plan ahead. This is improving in literacy activities, which have recently been a whole-school focus.
36. The organisation of the nursery and reception classes is broadly the same as at the time of the last inspection. Staff work towards the Early Learning Goals in the six areas of

learning. Planned activities complement these, but there is not always a sharp enough focus in teaching to move the children on fast enough. At times, children spend too much time sitting on the carpet and the pace of lessons slows. Many find it difficult to concentrate and they soon lose the thread of discussions, although few are disruptive. Staff use time and resources satisfactorily.

37. The support provided for pupils for whom English is an additional language is sound. Staff support children's choices and encourage them to take part in discussions and all other activities. They cater well for children with special educational needs. Staff provide good support and tailor activities closely to children's individual education plans. They record children's progress carefully and use this information effectively to plan the next steps in learning.
38. Homework is well used in Foundation Stage classes. Children in the reception class, for example, have homework in reading, phonics and number work each week. Children are very keen on their homework and parents value the opportunity to be involved in their children's learning.

Years 1 and 2

39. In Years 1 and 2, the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Good teaching was observed in 59 per cent of lessons in these classes. Three very good lessons were observed. Two of them were taught by specialists from the Wednesbury Education Action Zone, who are leading projects in art and design and music. This expertise is helping the school develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in these creative areas. Class teachers and support staff are fully involved in these lessons and are developing their own knowledge through working with specialists. This good practice benefits all members of the school community.
40. The quality of teaching in literacy is good. This is because there is currently a focus throughout the school on raising the quality of teaching and learning in this area. Staff have modified the organisation of the literacy hour to provide more time for teaching writing skills in the main session. Guided reading now takes place in every class at the beginning of the afternoon session. These new arrangements are working well. They provide much better opportunities for teachers to work with children on the specific development of skills. The rate of progress pupils make is increasing and this is starting to have an impact on the standards they achieve.
41. Teaching is satisfactory in numeracy. As in literacy, staff follow the national strategies. Teachers are working hard to develop pupils' mental mathematics and problem-solving skills. In both information and communication technology and numeracy, there is limited application of skills across the curriculum.
42. During the inspection, good teaching was seen in science and design and technology. In both of these subjects, teachers are successfully developing more practical approaches to teaching and learning. These particularly suit the pupils in this school, most of whom have low speaking and listening skills and limited concentration spans. In these lessons, teachers make good use of time. They give straightforward explanations and instructions before pupils get down to their practical activities. From time to time pupils are brought back together to hear about the next step in learning and to check that they have carried out what was required of them. In the previous inspection, prolonged explanations, with pupils sitting on the carpet, were criticised. In these good lessons, this has been addressed. In other lessons, there are occasions when pupils spend too much time listening to the teacher at the expense of working time.

43. Teachers' knowledge and understanding are satisfactory. Individual teachers have subject strengths and there is a full programme of in-service training in place to support the objectives set in teachers' performance management programmes. Staff are still in the process of acquiring the skills, knowledge and understanding to help them develop pupils' skills across the curriculum.
44. Basic skills are soundly taught throughout Years 1 and 2. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are low. Teachers are aware of the importance of promoting regular opportunities for them to develop these in all aspects of the curriculum. New arrangements for developing speaking and listening are now agreed and some teachers are already implementing these in their classes. In the best practice, teachers use questions well, not only to maintain pupils' concentration, but also to engage their interest and develop their thinking skills. This was well illustrated in a Year 2 science lesson where the prompting and encouragement of staff successfully enabled pupils to develop a sequence of events in their investigation.
45. Teachers' planning is sound. The school is in the process of revising and implementing its yearly and termly plans. There is now a much more consistent approach to the development of skills across the curriculum because schemes of work are now in place to guide them. However, much is only recently in place and adjustments are still being made. One area in which teachers still need to improve their planning is in the use of assessment information. They gather a lot of information from talking and listening to pupils and by looking at finished work. Until recently, staff have not made much use of the results of statutory and other test and assessment results to modify their planning to meet the individual needs of pupils.
46. Where planning falls down is in terms of the evaluation of what pupils have achieved in a lesson. There is not always a clear indication about who has achieved the objectives set for the lesson to identify the next steps in learning. This is particularly the case for the average attaining and nearly average attaining pupils. In consequence, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are satisfactory because the information they have is not always precise enough. This affects the productivity and pace of working when activities are not fully matched to pupils' needs.
47. By contrast, teachers' expectations, planning and assessment of pupils with statements of special educational need are much sharper because these pupils have individual education plans, and support staff monitor progress individually. As a result, pupils make good progress. Teachers do make provision for the higher attaining pupils through providing more challenging work, but this is not consistent across the curriculum.
48. Teachers' management of pupils is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, firmly based on trust and mutual respect. The high quality of relationships evident between all members of the school community underlies this. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to learn to co-operate and collaborate with each other. This helps them to understand what they are learning and how important it is to take account of the views and findings of others. This was well illustrated in a design and technology lesson, where pupils were sharing their evaluations on the designs they had produced.
49. The pace of work in lessons is sound. Lesson introductions usually have a clear focus and pupils are generally aware of what they are going to achieve by the end of the lesson. End-of-lesson review sessions, when staff and pupils look at what has been achieved, are sometimes a little hurried.
50. Subject co-ordinators are starting to build up collections of pupils' work, annotated with National Curriculum levels. These will help teachers judge the standards pupils are already achieving, and can be expected to achieve, as they move through the school.

Pupils' work is often marked with them. However, written comments are often restricted to praise or a general comment rather than indicating how improvement can be achieved. Although some pupils have personal targets for improvement, marking does not consistently refer to these.

51. The deployment of support staff is satisfactory. Teachers involve support staff in the planning of what they are to do to support pupils' learning. Support staff work with individuals and groups of pupils, explaining and interpreting the teacher's instructions. Pupils for whom English is an additional language have the extra support they need to take a full part in lessons. Satisfactory use is made of learning resources.
52. The homework set for pupils is about right for their ages. Reading and spellings are regular features for pupils in Years 1 to 2. Most pupils like to do work at home and parents are pleased to be involved in their children's learning.

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

53. The quality and range of the curriculum are satisfactory. All statutory requirements are met.
54. Since the inspection of March 2000, the school has gradually implemented schemes of work in almost all subjects. In art and design, and physical education, new schemes are currently in preparation. Teachers now have a clear framework to work from so that planning can build systematically on previous learning. The school has very recently drawn up, and is about to implement, a policy for the development of speaking and listening skills, from entry to nursery to the end of Year 2. Speaking and listening skills remain weak and hamper achievement in English and in other subjects.
55. The balance of the curriculum has improved. Whilst priority is rightly given to the teaching of English and mathematics, the school now gives adequate time to all other subjects of the National Curriculum. Religious education follows the locally agreed syllabus. In art and music, the involvement of the Wednesbury Education Action Zone (WEAZ) enriches the curriculum by supporting a range of interesting creative experiences for pupils in Years 1 and 2.
56. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage¹⁰ is based on the nationally recommended Areas of Learning¹¹ and is satisfactory overall. The particular emphasis rightly given to personal, social and emotional development enables children to achieve well in this area. Insufficient planned use is made of the school's outdoor play area. This results in missed opportunities to extend the children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their physical development. The introduction of suitable elements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies during the reception year prepares children successfully for the next stage of their education in Year 1.
57. There are good systems for the teaching of literacy. The National Literacy Strategy is fully implemented. The school has sensibly adapted the daily literacy hour to meet its own specific needs. As a result, there are signs that standards in writing are beginning to improve. The school has satisfactory strategies for teaching numeracy. Particular emphasis is put on the promotion of basic skills through the sound implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The greater attention recently given to the development of mental mathematics and to problem solving is just beginning to raise achievement.

¹⁰ The Foundation Stage is the education provided for children from entry to a Nursery to the end of the Reception class.

¹¹ The six Areas of Learning are personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.

58. Most of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is within the classroom. The very specific nature of the needs of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need sometimes requires them to be withdrawn from the classroom, but they have full access to all aspects of the curriculum. Pupils have individual learning plans with clear targets, which are followed through and regularly reviewed. Pupils, parents and teachers share targets and so all are aware of the progress made.
59. Class teachers and learning support assistants plan together and use assessment information to guide future learning. This information is shared with the special educational needs co-ordinator, who ensures that individual targets are updated.
60. The school continues to provide an adequate range of extra-curricular activities. Currently, a weekly football club for about 25 pupils is led by staff from West Bromwich Albion Football Club. Extra clubs in the summer include art and design, computers and games. Visits, for instance, to Twycross Zoo and The Black Country Museum, and visitors, like theatre groups and storytellers, enliven the day-to-day curriculum. Theme days, like Art Day, World Book Day, or Divali Day involve all classes and heighten the pupils' enthusiasm for learning.
61. Through its aims and practical organisation of the curriculum, the school demonstrates its high commitment to including all pupils in every aspect of school life. Children in the Nursery Assessment Unit are fully involved in all activities. Non-teaching support is carefully organised to ensure that all pupils regardless of age, ability, gender or ethnicity have full access to the curriculum. In lessons, staff show good awareness of the needs of individual pupils, for instance, in tailoring their questions to provide appropriate challenge to individual pupils.
62. In its daily life, the school has established routines and clear expectations, which promote personal, social and health education satisfactorily. For instance, discussions in assemblies and religious education lessons increase pupils' understanding of moral and social dilemmas. Staff answer questions about sex education sensitively on an individual basis. Awareness of the use and misuse of drugs is taught appropriately through the science curriculum. In the nursery and reception classes, weekly 'circle time'¹² sessions support the development of personal and social skills.
63. The school has sound links with the local community and benefits from the coaching sessions offered by a local professional football club. Pupils take part in the Sandwell Dance and Music Festival and make good use of local museums and art galleries. They are starting to use the Internet to access wider horizons.
64. Good relationships with partner institutions are particularly helpful to the school. Liaison with the receiving junior school results in a smooth transition for pupils at the end of Year 2, and occasional use of the junior computer suite. Curricular liaison is just beginning to be developed through joint training. Shared experiences through the Wednesbury Education Action Zone are having a beneficial effect on the curriculum. Placements for teaching and nursery nurse students promote the effective links between the school and local colleges.
65. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development continues to be satisfactory as reported at the time of the previous inspection. Acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements and provide opportunities for reflection. Assemblies are planned, well organised and include time for prayer.

¹² During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. All pupils agree that no interruptions should occur and only one person at a time will speak. Respect for other pupils' views will occur at all times and therefore pupils feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

66. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Across the curriculum, spiritual development is encouraged through, for example, poetry, music and art. In religious education, pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own experiences of, for example, a wedding ceremony when studying traditions. Pupils in a Year 2 art lesson on paint mixing were thrilled at the change in colours. Display is used to encourage pupils to consider the wonder of nature, such as the winter display incorporating natural objects and pupils' models.
67. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. There is a clear and well understood set of values, which underpin all school activities. From the time they enter school, children are aware of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Staff on duty at lunchtime supervise pupils with care and respect, ensuring the school's policy for discipline is used well. Moral issues are discussed in lessons, such as in the Year 2 lesson on human rights when Emily Pankhurst and Martin Luther King were studied.
68. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Adults set good examples and help pupils raise their self-esteem and confidence in all areas of school life. Opportunities for pupils to collaborate and co-operate are included in lessons, particularly practical sessions in science and design and technology. Pupils respond well to this. They take part in fund raising for charities such as Children In Need, which gives them an awareness of others less fortunate than themselves.
69. The school's provision for cultural development is satisfactory overall. Displays include art and writing from the pupils' own cultures. Additionally, pupils visit places of interest such as the Black Country Museum. The school provides opportunities for pupils to study other cultures. For example, in religious education pupils develop an understanding of world faiths through the study of Sikhism. Pupils also visit the Wednesbury Art Gallery for exhibitions of music and art. Nevertheless, the school gives insufficient attention to planning opportunities for pupils to appreciate the wider diversity of cultures within Great Britain today.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

70. As found at the previous inspection, staff work hard to provide a caring environment. Adults treat pupils with respect and value them as individuals. They monitor the personal development of pupils well through circle time and class discussions. Staff place good emphasis on raising pupils' self-esteem and making them aware of their individual achievement. This gives pupils confidence in their own ability and encourages them to respond positively to new challenges. Parents are pleased with the standard of care the school provides.
71. The school provides good support for pupils with special educational needs. It is a very caring school where pupils, parents and teachers all play an important part in learning. All are aware of the progress pupils make. Support from home and outside agencies is valued and used well. All pupils on the register have someone they can relate to and turn to with any problems. Their progress is tracked on a regular basis and individual education plans systematically updated. The school meets the requirements set out in pupils' statements of special educational need.
72. There are good arrangements for assessing the progress of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need and those children in the Nursery Assessment Unit who do not yet have statements. There is, however, still much to be done before assessment is systematically used to inform the next steps in learning for all pupils in the school.
73. The school makes simple assessments of what children can do when they start in the nursery and again at the beginning of the reception year. Staff now collect this information

at the same time for all children rather than across a period of weeks. These and the results of statutory tests and assessments in English, mathematics and science provide the school with valuable information. The headteacher has started to make detailed analyses of the data available and is sharing the outcomes with staff. She is, for example, looking at the progress made by different groups of pupils such as boys and girls, or pupils for whom English is additional language. However, teachers do not make systematic adjustments to the planned sequences of lessons to take account of pupils' strengths and weaknesses, particularly for those who are average attainers or just below average.

74. Most subject co-ordinators are developing portfolios of pupils' work to illustrate the progress pupils' make over longer periods of time. When these are in place, teachers will have a much better picture of what pupils can achieve.
75. Staff use the agreed procedures for promoting good behaviour consistently and effectively. There are few incidents of unacceptable behaviour and staff deal promptly with any reported concerns. The home/school agreement supports these procedures well.
76. Arrangements for monitoring attendance are good. Registers are called at the beginning of each session and any absence is carefully followed up. The education welfare officer works closely with staff and visits the school fortnightly. Staff are familiar with child protection procedures. These comply with the recommendations of the area child protection committee.
77. The school effectively looks after pupils' health, safety and general wellbeing. Sex education and drug awareness form part of the school programme for health education, and outside agencies support this during health promotion week. The school follows effective procedures regarding accidents and first aid. Staff inform parents promptly of any accidents involving their children and of any treatment given. There is a detailed health and safety policy agreed by the governing body and they undertake risk assessments regularly.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

78. The school continues to have strong links with parents. The majority of parents indicate that they are pleased with what the school provides. Parents are proud of the caring ethos and have confidence in the school's ability to meet the needs of their children.
79. The school provides useful information for parents. Most parents who replied to the parents' questionnaire expressed satisfaction with the quality and quantity of information they receive in regular newsletters and the termly curriculum letter.
80. Parents know they are welcome in school and can talk to teachers about concerns at any reasonable time. Most parents feel they are given a clear picture of how their children are progressing at the termly parent-teacher consultation meetings and in annual progress reports, which contain information on work covered, progress being made and targets for development.
81. The school holds workshops for parents on literacy and numeracy, which enable them to better support their children's learning at home. The majority of parents are supportive of homework and happy with the amount their children receive. Staff much appreciate the contribution of the regular, reliable number of parents who help in school.
82. A thriving mother and toddler group meets in school weekly. The school caretaker organises a breakfast club for pupils and provides coffee and bacon sandwiches for parents after the Friday celebration assembly. The Parents and Friends Association is

open to all. It is active in organising fund-raising events, which raise considerable amounts of money to assist with school resources.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

83. The headteacher's strong and purposeful leadership of the school is instrumental in bringing about improvement. She was originally seconded to the school in October 2000. She took up her present position at the beginning of the school year. She is working closely with the governors, with whom she shares an exciting vision for the future development of the school. The senior management team has been reduced in number from six to three members and the roles and responsibilities of staff reviewed and restructured. Teaching staff are working hard to meet the challenges these important changes present. Ninety per cent of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire feel that the school is well led and managed.
84. The school is in the process of reviewing all its written policies and documentation. Its written aims reflect what the school seeks to achieve for its pupils, and parents fully support these. Staff are very committed to the pupils in their care. The administrative and caretaking staff make a considerable contribution to the smooth day-to-day running of the school. The good relationships between adults and children are at the root of the school's good ethos. All pupils have full access to the curriculum and school activities. Individual achievements are both valued and celebrated. This has a positive impact in raising pupils' feelings of self-worth and the progress they make.
85. At the time of the last inspection in March 2000, the leadership and management of the school were unsatisfactory. The senior management team and school development plan were ineffective. The governing body was informed rather than involved in shaping the work of the school. Change was not well managed or monitored and inspectors found that there was no shared, secure view as to how effective teaching and learning could be secured. The school was judged to have serious weaknesses.
86. After a shaky start, the school has made sound and, in some areas, good progress in the areas identified for action at the time of the last inspection. The new headteacher has focused on raising the standards of teaching and learning. The success of this strategy is still to be fully realised, but good foundations are in place. There are still many areas to work on, particularly about the development of pupils' capacity to think and work independently. There is a shared commitment in the school to succeed and ongoing work in conjunction with the Wednesbury Education Action Zone supports this.
87. **Most members of staff have responsibility for one curriculum area and some are responsible for two. The headteacher and governors have recently reviewed and re-allocated these duties in the light of staff changes. They are also aiming to achieve a better match of responsibilities than hitherto for those staff who receive substantial additional salary allowances. Overall, curriculum co-ordinators are responding well to the challenges of their new responsibilities. The special educational needs co-ordinator has worked very hard to streamline and improve the management of this provision across the school. She effectively manages a high number of pupils on the register of special educational needs, including a comparatively very high number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need.**
88. **The school is developing a whole-school approach to planning and monitoring the curriculum, which will provide curriculum co-ordinators with a good basis for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. At present, the headteacher, literacy and numeracy co-ordinators, and local education authority advisers are monitoring teaching to establish a common approach. Recent monitoring of the**

teaching of literacy has helped to strengthen the school's approach and to improve the progress made by pupils. The headteacher has plans to develop teachers' skills as curriculum managers through in-service training. She has rightly identified the importance of ensuring an agreed and shared approach to this work.

89. The school is successfully implementing its performance management policy. The headteacher reports that objective setting and lesson observations are playing a key role in her drive to bring about improvement. All key dates have been met. A good structure for effective monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is now in place but, as yet, its impact has yet to be effectively felt throughout the school.
90. Governors make a valued contribution to the work of the school. They have made good progress in developing their role since the last inspection. One governor commented to inspectors that the outcome of the previous inspection had come as a shock to the governors. Some resigned but those that remained, together with new governors, resolved that they would never find themselves in the same position again. They have attended training and gained the confidence to ask questions and get answers. They are now well involved in shaping the direction of the school. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their experience in business, industry and the community benefits the school well. The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities and follows proper procedures.
91. The school's improvement plan effectively identifies priorities for the current and future development of the school. Its structure pays appropriate attention to identifying costings, time scales, responsibilities and success criteria. The structure of the plan makes provision for initiatives to be monitored and for the governing body to evaluate the outcomes. The present plan covers a number of well-chosen and pertinent areas for development. The longer-term development of the school is taking shape as the school looks beyond the present phase of its development.
92. The school continues to face considerable financial challenges arising from planned reductions in pupil numbers to a two-form entry. The quality of financial planning is satisfactory. An earlier lack of forward planning has required the headteacher and governors to embark on a series of difficult decisions to reduce staffing levels. The school is currently drawing on its reserves as it adjusts its spending commitments to match its reduced income. Although there are many areas where the school would like to invest, it has very little leeway with its budget at present. Spending decisions are carefully costed and the school makes proper use of the specific grants and provision available to it.
93. The school receives additional funds from the local education authority to support the work of the Nursery Assessment Unit and the provision for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. The local education authority works with other agencies to identify children from within the Sandwell Metropolitan Borough for placement in the school. Usually, these placements are for a fixed period whilst children's needs are assessed and appropriate provision is arranged to meet their needs. Over time, it has become customary for many children to remain in the school. There appear to be no clearly agreed criteria to determine who would continue to benefit from these placements. The headteacher has recently re-organised the provision for the Nursery Assessment Unit and is in the process of reviewing how effectively the school meets the needs of pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders. At present, the proportion of statemented pupils in Years 1 and 2 is running at nearly six times the national average.

94. **Financial management is sound. Effective procedures are in place. The school keeps careful track of its income and expenditure. The governors and headteacher apply the principles of 'best value' to the school's purchases and have successfully identified areas where savings can be made without affecting the quality of education provided for pupils. Pupils benefit from carefully targeted spending. The school has responded positively to the recommendations made in the latest audit report. The school provides satisfactory value for money.**
95. **Satisfactory use is made of new technologies in supporting the administration and management of the school. The school uses a computerised accounting system and appropriate safeguards are in place to protect data.**
96. **There are sufficient, suitably qualified teachers and support staff to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and the provision for children at the Foundation Stage. The match of support staff to the needs of those with Statements of Special Educational Need is good. This has a positive impact on the progress made by pupils.**
97. **The school's induction arrangements for new staff are satisfactory. A partnership agreement is held between the school and the University of Wolverhampton to provide places for students undertaking initial teacher training courses. The school provides placements for students undertaking child care and similar courses.**
98. The school is clean, tidy and well maintained by the hard working caretaker and her staff. The recently re-organised library is well laid out. The playground and field are of suitable size for the number of pupils on role, with a secure play area for children under five years of age. However, the nursery classroom is cold and the available space is not well organised. The lack of running water in one classroom makes practical work more difficult to organise and involves pupils in leaving their room to wash their hands.
99. The school has a satisfactory level of learning resources overall with good resources for information and communication technology. The quality of learning resources is satisfactory and they are accessible to staff and, where appropriate, pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

100. The governors, headteacher and staff should now improve standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 2 by:
- (1) planning more carefully at the Foundation Stage for the 'Stepping Stones for Learning' leading to Early Learning Goals and ensuring that these skills are built upon through Years 1 and 2; (*paragraphs 112-141*)
 - (2) improving and developing pupils' speaking and listening skills by systematically implementing the newly agreed policy throughout the school; (*paragraphs 13, 19, 42, 44, 54, 141-142, 148-149, 157, 170 and 184*)
 - (3) making better use of assessment information to match work more closely to the needs of average and above average attaining pupils; (*paragraphs 45, 72-73, 120, 166, 175, 191, 209, 224 and 229*)
 - (4) closely monitoring teaching and learning to ensure that pupils all of abilities make the best possible progress. (*paragraphs 88-89*)

In addition, the school should address the following matters:

- the timing of withdrawal groups so that pupils do not miss important parts of lessons; (*paragraphs 179 and 216*)
- the use of information and communication technology skills across the curriculum; (*paragraphs 204, 206 and 208-210*)
- the quality of the accommodation in the nursery; (*paragraph 98*)
- the use of outside space in the Foundation Stage. (*paragraph 121*)

The governors and headteacher should also agree with the local education authority clearer procedures for the education of children who have completed their placement in the Nursery Assessment Unit. (*paragraph 93*)

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Nursery Assessment Unit

101. The provision for the assessment of specific children in the nursery is good because of the range of learning opportunities in the nursery and the clear structure and timetable for the assessment process introduced by the head teacher.
102. There is a caring and supportive atmosphere in the nursery and this benefits all children. The children under assessment have individual education plans and good records are kept so that targets are reviewed and shared with all who work with the children.
103. Teaching has a clear focus and the nursery teacher and her staff provide a wide range of interesting learning activities for children to explore and take part in with other children. Progress is reviewed daily and adjustments made to targets as necessary. The level of inclusion in activities is good and managed well by staff.

Enhanced Learning Provision

104. The provision for pupils with Autistic Spectrum Disorders is good. Strengths lie in the caring and supportive atmosphere in the school and the interesting opportunities for learning that are planned. There is a firm commitment from the headteacher and other members of staff to ensure that the school strongly promotes inclusion.
105. Pupils are involved in some part of all lessons and assemblies because they have scheduled lessons with the pupils in their class as well as opportunities to pursue their individual programmes in the low stimulus room. The provision was established before the last inspection with the specific aim of including pupils in mainstream classes for as many activities as possible, whilst ensuring that their specific needs in relation to their autism are met in full.
106. Pupils make good progress in their social development and towards their academic targets on their individual education plans because of the suitability of the targets. Staff make good use of assessment information for target setting on individual education plans and for preparing pupils to work with others in their class. For example, each pupil has a key worker who is a member of the support staff. Together they spend some time in literacy and numeracy lessons with the class, and complete tasks either in the classroom or in the low stimulus room before returning to join the group.
107. Teachers and support staff work together well as a team to adapt the curriculum and to plan how to include the autistic pupils in all lessons. Class teachers are very supportive of pupils with autism. Support staff, some of whom have considerable experience and qualifications in working with pupils with autism, work very hard to provide good support for the pupils and to meet their needs. They maintain good records of pupils' progress and of what they need to learn next. For example, an autistic pupil was supported very sensitively in a physical education lesson. He had time and space to enjoy the activities, and to improve his own skills in moving around the hall and jumping, whilst remaining part of the group. There is good communication between class teachers and support staff to ensure that pupils fulfil their academic potential by building on what they are learning, alongside other pupils, as well as completing their own specific tasks.
108. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good, so that learning takes place in a purposeful way. This was particularly evident in a music lesson for the group of autistic pupils. They listened attentively to the music and, relaxing against an adult, moved appropriately to the music, making delicate and staccato movements with their hands as

the music required. There was good reinforcement of the names of parts of the body and important directional words in this valuable, calm session.

109. Staff carry out assessments thoughtfully. Targets, which are achievable and manageable, are reviewed regularly and effectively. The school complies fully with the Code of Practice¹³ and liaises effectively with outside agencies. Reviews are carried out promptly and efficiently to ensure that the correct level of support is available to meet the needs of the pupils when they leave the infant school. Class teachers are involved thoughtfully in discussing and monitoring the progress of autistic children in their class.
110. Parents are included well at reviews and come into school, for example to assemblies. Communication between home and school is good.
111. Since the last inspection, the low-stimulus room has been completed and pupils have good access to the library and to computers. There is, however, no soft-play room and the school would find this a valuable resource. The funding is spent appropriately to provide a suitable range of useful resources and to ensure that there are valuable, and essential, training opportunities for staff. The school is aware that it is important that all pupils with autism are able to benefit from arrangements for inclusion in activities and lessons in the school. The headteacher, ably supported by the special educational needs co-ordinator and people with expertise in the teaching of pupils on the autistic spectrum, manages the provision well. The school ensures that the inclusion meets the needs of the school and the autistic pupils.

¹³ Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities, duties and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help and support to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	0	3	17	21	0	0	0
Percentage	0	7	42	51	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	32	174
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	31

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	13
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	58

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	37	34	71

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	26	25	29
	Girls	27	29	28
	Total	53	54	57
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	75 (81)	76 (71)	80 (90)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	28	29	32
	Girls	26	29	29
	Total	54	58	61
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	76 (77)	82 (83)	86 (77)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	0
White	104
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	322

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	32
Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	128
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/1
	£
Total income	638,347
Total expenditure	648,857
Expenditure per pupil	2,343
Balance brought forward from previous year	24,484
Balance carried forward to next year	13,974

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 16%

Number of questionnaires sent out	237
Number of questionnaires returned	38

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	21	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	34	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	50	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	50	16	0	5
The teaching is good.	50	47	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	45	13	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	21	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	45	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	39	11	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	45	45	0	3	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	40	5	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	45	18	5	11

Other issues raised by parents

Parents feel they can talk to staff at any time.

They are pleased that their children are happy at school.

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

112. The Foundation Stage consists of a separate nursery and two reception classes. Children attend nursery on a part-time basis and, at the time of the inspection, most of the 68 children were still three years old. The two reception classes are housed a distance away from the nursery and provide 60 full-time places. Most children in the reception classes were four years of age at the time of the inspection.
113. The nursery includes an Assessment Unit for children with special educational needs. Presently, five children work in this inclusive setting and have access to all areas of experience. The staff team has a very clear understanding of how young children grow and learn, and provide effective support for a very wide range of special needs.
114. Children enjoy coming to school and settle happily into the nursery. There is a strong partnership with parents, who are keen to foster links between learning at home and in school. This good start to school life continues throughout the Foundation Stage.
115. Whilst the level of care in the nursery is high, the provision in the nursery and reception classes is satisfactory overall. Some aspects of planning and managing learning need clarification. There are pockets of good teaching and learning, which need to have a clearer focus in planning for work in the areas of experience. In this way, children will meet the challenge of a wide range of activities and their learning can be more easily monitored and assessed.
116. Teachers are not using the 'Stepping Stones for Learning' clearly enough in their planning. This means that learning does not always follow a progressive path, building upon what has been previously learned and understood. Following through the 'Stepping Stones' into the reception classes would also help to widen teachers' knowledge of the early years curriculum and ensure that the progress made in nursery is built upon in the reception classes.
117. At the start of the nursery, simple checks show that children achieve well below the levels expected for their age. Their skills in communication and language are low, with many children using gestures and single words to communicate. Nevertheless, progress is good and children begin to listen and respond to others. Their skills in all other areas of experience are also below average. In personal, social and emotional development, few seek out others to share experiences, work in a group or take turns. In their mathematical development, most children have an interest in numbers and counting, but do not use number language spontaneously.
118. Simple tests at the start of reception show that, despite the progress made in nursery, children attain below the expected levels for their age. They are expected to achieve below the Early Learning Goals in all areas of experience by the end of the Foundation Stage.
119. Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is sound. Effective teaching in the nursery encourages children to make choices and decisions about their learning and to develop their confidence and independence. An instance is when children plan which experiences they are going to visit and then review their learning with others. Teachers in the reception classes also plan work with a balance of teacher guided and child-chosen experiences. However, when teachers guide literacy and numeracy sessions, the length of time spent working within a whole class group is too long for some of the younger and less capable

children. In guided group work, good teaching is enabling children who work at a faster rate to reach higher levels with their reading and writing.

120. The Foundation Stage is fully inclusive to all children. Children from minority ethnic groups settle happily into school life, although checks on their language needs could be more firmly established in assessment procedures. Boys and girls visit a similar range of experiences. Children with special educational needs are well supported, often on a one-to-one basis, and make good progress.
121. Although outdoor experiences are planned, monitoring is not close enough to ensure regular access for all children in the Foundation Stage.

Personal, social and emotional development

122. Despite settling in well in the nursery and making steady progress as they move through the reception classes, children attain below the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
123. At the start of school, personal and social skills are well below average. Although children show curiosity, few seek out others to share experiences. Many three-year-olds, for example, work side by side in sand play activities without relating to each other or sharing resources. Teaching is sound. Teachers encourage children to initiate ideas and to speak confidently in a familiar group and use puppets effectively in 'large group time' for this purpose. Children are beginning to understand right from wrong and to see how selfish actions can affect others.
124. In the reception classes, children show initiative as they plan their work in creative experiences. They are proud of their printing and play-dough models. However, they do not take enough responsibility when tidying away art materials and painting aprons. Relationships between the children and the staff team are good and encourage the children to have greater confidence when approaching new experiences.

Language, Literacy and Communication

125. Skills with language and communication are particularly low at the start of school. By the end of the Foundation Stage achievement is below the expectations of the Early Learning Goals.
126. Some good progress is being made with the development of speaking skills. Teaching is often effective because of the good use made of questioning and modelling responses. From communicating with gestures and single words in the nursery, children begin to talk more freely in small groups in the reception classes. They listen more attentively and respond to stories in a positive way.
127. Very few children have experience of books, making marks and exploring early writing. In the nursery, children learn to recognise reading and writing in their environment by making simple books, using labels from packets of their favourite food. Teachers also take advantage of incidental opportunities to encourage children to read and write. For instance, they make lists of ingredients used when they are making sandwiches. Children in the reception classes enjoy sharing 'big book' stories, and many can read and write their own names. A small number of children read simple stories, recognise everyday words by sight and link letters with their sounds.

Mathematical development

128. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children are still working towards the Early Learning Goals. Progress is steady.
129. Teachers make good use of incidental learning to develop mathematical skills. Examples of effective teaching are linked to making cakes and sandwiches in the nursery. More confident learners can recognise and label basic shapes. For example, children working in a group pointed to corners on their square sandwiches and identified that triangular sandwiches have three corners. Two children out of the six in this small group could count to five and above. The range of ability and spoken competence within the group was wide and was representative of the class as a whole. In reception, children begin to use and understand 'more and less' and can count to 10 and beyond. More capable learners count on and backwards and add one more to make 'tower blocks' with unifix cubes. They begin to recognise numbers and start to write them independently. Staff support well in small group activities those children with special educational needs, and children work hard.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

130. Children make good progress with their learning, but are expected to achieve below the Early Learning Goals because of their lower than average starting point.
131. Teaching is often good, especially when teachers follow the children's lead and encourage those who are not confident speakers to talk about their learning. Making sandwiches is a good example of how three-year-olds can use their senses to explore the world around them. More competent speakers in the group label the different jams and identify what is sweet or tangy. Less confident children experiment with spreading different mixtures and respond to questions with nods and gestures.
132. In the reception classes, four-year-olds use construction kits to produce models with moving wheels and then go on to collaborate in a group to construct a large car park for their vehicles. Teachers show interest in what pupils are making and ask questions about the textures of different materials, such as play dough and what happens when water is added to paint. Responses are often very limited, with few children asking or explaining themselves why things happen.
133. Children learn about the world around them as they study the changing weather patterns and days of the week. They have access to computers, with older children learning to click on and off icons and to control the mouse.

Physical development

134. Children are expected to achieve below the Early Learning Goals. Teachers plan satisfactory experiences, but there needs to be closer monitoring of the use of outdoor experiences and large outdoor toys.
135. Nursery children have access to a secure outdoor play area. It had limited use during the inspection because of poor weather. The children are still learning how to negotiate pathways and to move with confidence in larger areas of space. Teachers encourage them to move in a variety of ways, but few are confident enough to experiment with hopping or trying to skip. When using small apparatus, the vast majority of children are still gaining control over throwing or kicking balls and rolling hoops.
136. The soft play area in the nursery is used to develop children's skills with a range of small and large equipment. The children enjoy making large constructions out of boxes and show increasing control over manipulating and pushing. They experiment with different

ways of moving in and out of their constructions, and begin to move with greater confidence and imagination.

137. Children in the reception classes use the hall space with a growing sense of safety. They are beginning to be aware of others and start to understand the importance of warming up. They experiment with different ways of jumping and develop skills with landing quietly and safely. Children with special educational needs work well in these lessons and model their sequence of movements for the class.

Creative development

138. Children are expected to achieve below the Early learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.
139. Teaching is sound in this area and children make satisfactory progress. In the reception classes, children make choices of the activities they visit and explore a wide range of experiences, including play-dough, printing, painting and collage. Over time, they develop their skills with using and applying paint and rolling and joining dough to form freestanding models of animals and human beings. In the nursery, children explore joining and sticking activities, use a range of tools to cut and hammer, and make constructions out of wood. They use nails, pins and tape to join different materials together.
140. In both the nursery and reception, children begin to experiment with colour. Three-year-olds have ready access to paint and enjoy applying layers, while reception children choose particular colours to use for effect.
141. More imaginative use could be made of role-play areas in the Foundation Stage, especially for the development of speaking and listening and for creative play. Little music making was heard in the nursery or reception classes during the inspection.

ENGLISH

142. Over the last four years, standards in the national reading tests at the end of Year 2 have varied from being similar to those attained nationally to falling well below average. Standards in writing have remained well below the national average, with the exception of the 1999 national tests, when attainment was above average. Skills in speaking and listening have remained stubbornly low. Pupils are not achieving as well with their reading and writing compared with similar schools.
143. However, the number of pupils with special educational needs in school is well above average and this affects results in the national tests in English. In the 1999 tests, for instance, there were fewer pupils with special educational needs and more pupils capable of reaching the higher levels, and so standards were at least average or better. In contrast, in the present Year 2, the high number of pupils with special educational needs, including six pupils with statements, is expected to lower results in the 2002 national tests.
144. Present inspection findings show that, by the end of Year 2, attainment in reading and writing is below average, and that skills in speaking are low. Nevertheless, progress is at least steady and can be good. This is because pupils are keen to learn and work in lessons is becoming better matched to their needs. Pupils capable of working at a faster rate and those with special educational needs make good progress. Good progress in a Year 1 class is linked to teacher expertise and expectation, which is helping to improve spelling and handwriting. In Year 2, the basic skills are taught well and learning was made exciting through imaginative writing linked to a 'Visit from aliens'. Support for pupils who are nearly achieving average levels with their reading and writing is not so well focused and so progress can vary.

145. The school has begun to improve handwriting, spelling and punctuation. These issues were identified in the previous inspection and in the 2001 Additional Inspectors' reports. They are currently priorities in the school's improvement plan. Skills with handwriting are taught consistently and so pupils develop finer control over the size and formation of letters. As yet, however, few seven-year-olds write in a joined style. Teachers have worked hard to raise standards in spelling by ensuring pupils recall everyday words by sight and by teaching spelling rules and patterns. However, many pupils still spell words as they say them - *cowt* (coat) *cowuld* (cold) and *yoomnbine* (human being) are typical of the examples found in pupils' independent writing in Year 2.
146. Teachers use the literacy hour well. They have modified its structure to meet the wide range of individual needs within each class. Guided group reading has a clear focus in afternoon sessions, when lessons are planned well for different levels of ability. Work with younger pupils provides examples of how pupils learning at a faster rate are encouraged to read simple books, whilst less capable readers are helped to develop their knowledge of letters and their sounds through interesting word games. Feedback time (the plenary session) provides the chance for pupils to share their learning and, in some classes, for teachers to assess what has been learned, so the next step can be planned.
147. The school works hard to provide opportunities for all groups to learn and work together. Pupils from minority groups make similar progress to their classmates. Indian heritage and Afro-Caribbean pupils achieve well. There is no marked difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with statements of their special educational needs are fully included in literacy lessons. Any work on a one-to-one basis, or withdrawal from class, is related to the support of their specific or individual needs.
148. By the end of Year 2, speaking and listening skills are still well below average. A lack of confidence and competence with the spoken word is holding back learning in English and in other subjects. At the start of school, very few pupils initiate talk or ask and answer questions confidently and many responses are in single words. Many pupils can listen only for short periods of time. Teachers use questioning very effectively to develop the pupils' use and understanding of spoken language and, over the year, group progress is evident. In Year 1, pupils begin to use talk to organise and sequence their thinking about stories and to help them clarify events.
149. By the end of Year 2, more capable speakers use spoken language more confidently in their learning and begin to extend their vocabulary and explore new words. Work on dictionaries gives an example, when pupils consider the meaning of 'definition' and explain 'it tells you something about something'. The school's policy for speaking and listening is in place and, in some classes, it is used well to encourage talk. For instance, teachers use the 'hot seat' for characters to answer questions about their role in traditional stories. However, well into Year 2, the great majority of pupils are still learning how to respond clearly to what they have heard and to use language to imagine and recreate.
150. By the end of Year 2, attainment in reading is below the level achieved nationally. The school is working hard to raise standards. It has re-organised guided group reading so that there is a finer focus on meeting the different needs of readers. Pupils also are encouraged to share books at home, but some pupils are anxious about younger siblings damaging their books.
151. In the 2001 national reading tests, 20 per cent of all pupils in Year 2 were reaching the higher levels with their reading. More able readers at present are reaching similar levels. They read with accuracy, fluency and understanding. They understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and, because they enjoy reading, a small number visit the local library and buy magazines and books to read at home.

152. Last year, 36 per cent of readers in Year 2 were nearly reaching average levels with their reading. A similar pattern is evident this year. Most pupils rely too heavily on a limited range of reading skills. Using only letters and their sounds to 'spell out' words, and reading word by word, holds back fluency. Very few pupils read on and use the whole sentence to make 'a good guess' at unknown words.
153. Less capable readers often work in small groups within the classroom and have effective adult support in lessons. In these groups, teachers work hard to encourage pupils to explore and talk about their books. Work is well planned to meet their learning needs and the range of books used is at an appropriate level. Teachers guide pupils through a structured reading scheme. Pupils enjoy the stories they are reading and make steady progress over time. Most pupils who have difficulties with their reading and writing skills are in the lower reading groups. Last year, 42 per cent of pupils in Year 2 attained the lower levels in national reading tests.
154. Although standards in writing, by the end of Year 2, are below the levels achieved nationally, pupils make steady to good progress. Pupils start school with well below average writing and speaking skills, but effective teaching is building links between the spoken and written word to improve standards in both. The range and purpose for writing have also improved since the last inspection. Over time, pupils progress from writing single words to writing statements and, by Year 2, begin to produce simple pieces of personal writing. Some good progress in a Year 1 class enabled average and more able pupils to enhance their story structure by creating story 'beginnings' that held the reader's interest.
155. Throughout the school, there is a significant minority of pupils who find it hard to write sentences that make sense and are grammatically correct. For instance, in Year 2, a group of pupils reaching nearly average levels with their writing, described a coat as, '*It is made out of vabric to go somewhere*'. Very few pupils use a wide range of connectives to join sentences, and fewer still understand why and how to use punctuation. Teachers' good modelling of writing in Year 2 classes draws sensitively from examples of pupils' written work and enables pupils to read through and improve the content. However, it is still only a minority of pupils who can point out where spellings are incorrect or suggest where a new sentence should start.
156. Pupils are well behaved in literacy lessons. They work well with each other in different class groups. As they gain greater confidence and competence as speakers, they become keener to join in and add to class discussions.
157. Teaching is good and this is helping pupils to achieve their best. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons to meet the wide range of needs in each class. The expertise of adult support for pupils with special educational needs is helping them to make good progress. On occasions, support for average and nearly average pupils is less well guided. Lessons are well paced and the basic skills are taught well. Teachers work very hard to develop the pupils' speaking skills and make good use of questions to open up discussions. A more consistent use of the school's speaking and listening policy will open up other strategies to develop speaking skills across all subjects.
158. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and manages the subject well. Resources for reading and guided group work are effective. As yet, computers are not being used to their maximum to help to develop and encourage reading and writing skills.

MATHEMATICS

159. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below average and are similar to those seen in the Additional Inspectors' visit in March 2001. The school's performance in statutory tests has varied between well below and below national average from year to year over the last four years. Standards in the 2001 test were well below the national average and below the average for similar schools. Over the last three years, boys are slightly ahead of girls in the tests. In both the Year 2 group of 2001 and in the current Year 2, the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is exceptionally high compared with the national average.
160. The school is determined to raise standards in mathematics. Recent training has improved the teachers' expertise and expectations. The school is trying to develop more focused opportunities for pupils to think for themselves and to solve problems. Whilst these measures have not yet had a significant effect on overall standards there are signs of improvement in pupils' achievement. Given the low starting points, the great majority of pupils now achieve as well as they can. The rate of learning in lessons is satisfactory.
161. Staff support pupils with special educational needs well as individuals and in small groups, so that they make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Teachers are aware of the needs of the few pupils who speak English as an additional language. They are fully included in all lessons and make similar progress to their peers. Boys and girls work together in mixed groupings and teachers are careful to involve them equally in questioning.
162. The National Numeracy Strategy is implemented satisfactorily in all classes and the increased emphasis on mental mathematics is improving pupils' skills at working out problems in their heads. Good use is made of the National Numeracy Framework to plan for the development of skills, step-by-step over time. Group work in the numeracy hour is well organised and teachers plan different tasks to meet the wide range of attainment in each class. This part of the lesson is not always as effective as it might be. Learning slows when groups are left to get on without enough help from the teacher, or when support workers are not sufficiently well briefed about the focus of the activity.
163. In Year 2, higher attainers are beginning to sequence numbers to 100. They understand the place value of digits as hundreds, tens and units. Teachers employ problem-solving techniques to reinforce this learning. For instance, pupils 'guess' a hidden number using questions like, '*Is it more or less than...?*', '*Is it odd or even?*'. This is successful in motivating pupils to concentrate and try hard. They are not yet able to add or subtract three-digit numbers with confidence. Higher attainers identify patterns in fives or twos on a 100 square and are beginning to build up multiplication tables. Average attainers are beginning to understand place value in two-digit numbers, but do not use this to add or subtract. They use strategies like doubling or near doubling and carry out multiplication by repeated addition. They solve problems such as sorting out mail for the postman as they learn about odd and even numbers. Lower attainers recognise numbers to 20. They add and subtract by counting on and back.
164. The work given to pupils is not always practical enough to enable them to understand number concepts. For instance, they have insufficient practical experience of sorting tens and ones to understand place value in numbers 10 to 20. Almost all pupils use everyday language to describe the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. Only the higher attainers describe shapes using number of sides or corners. Pupils do not recognise angles. All are becoming aware of standard measures, and average and high attainers use centimetres to measure accurately. Teachers plan class investigations carefully and provide opportunities for pupils to handle data. With varying degrees of support, pupils record their findings in simple block graphs.

165. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers use questions purposefully to enable pupils to extend their ideas as well as consolidate their understanding. For instance, when pupils are playing a number game they are required to explain not only who won but why. Teachers usually share objectives at the beginning of lessons so that pupils know what teachers expect of them. Pupils try hard to succeed. Teachers use plenary sessions¹⁴ effectively to check on pupils' understanding. When lessons proceed at too slow a pace, pupils lose interest and their productivity rate decreases. For instance, in one lesson in Year 1, pupils lost concentration and only a few in each group completed their set tasks. Marking of work does not show pupils how to improve.
166. Management of the subject is good. The curriculum co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning and provides constructive feedback to staff. The headteacher and curriculum co-ordinator are just beginning to evaluate the school's performance in the national tests and to identify areas of the curriculum for further development. Assessment procedures are in place, but teachers do not use them consistently enough to promote good progress for pupils of all attainment levels.
167. Links with literacy are satisfactory, but pupils' poor understanding of instructions often hampers their progress. Although they appear to listen, pupils are frequently confused. They have difficulty carrying out their group tasks without further help. Apart from one Year 2 class, where the interactive whiteboard was used very well, information technology is not used sufficiently to support learning in mathematics. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development as pupils collaborate in pairs. They learn to wait their turn and win or lose gracefully in group games.
168. There are good initiatives to train parents to provide extra help in the 'Enable Numeracy' scheme.

SCIENCE

169. Standards in science are just below those expected for pupils at the end of Year 2. This is similar to the teacher assessments in 2001 and to the standards reported at the time of the last inspection. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need in this year group is high. There are also a number of pupils whose knowledge and understanding is similar and greater than that expected of children at this age.
170. Pupils make satisfactory progress. Their low speaking and listening skills and their ability to concentrate and think through ideas slow the rate of progress of many pupils. Although staff work hard to focus pupils on what they have to do and ask questions to make them think, pupils' knowledge and understanding is developing from a low point.
171. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils were exploring different senses – taste, touch, sight, smell and hearing. This was a well-prepared lesson that immediately captured the pupils' attention. The teacher had prepared cards to remind pupils what the senses were and each was given a special name, for example '*tongue tasters*', '*see lookers*' and '*touch feelers*'. This play on language was very helpful throughout the lesson in reminding the pupils about each sense. A good amount of adult support enabled small groups of pupils to be carefully guided in their practical work and to test each sense. In addition to developing pupils' science skills, good attention was paid to helping them become more independent, express their ideas and listen to what others have to say. This was most important in the 'feely bag' group, who needed to listen to the clues from each other to make the correct guess.

¹⁴ The plenary session is the last part of the lesson. It is usually used to review what pupils have achieved in the lesson and flag up the next steps in learning for future lessons.

172. In Year 2, pupils sorted materials into three categories – translucent, transparent and opaque. This terminology was new to them and their teacher took great care to explain very clearly what each term meant, making good use of everyday objects. Pupils then had to apply this knowledge to grouping a range of sample materials. This was a challenging activity for many pupils, but they rose to it. They find making decisions relatively easy, but justifying their choices much harder. Staff were very supportive in giving pupils help to ask the right questions and to use the correct terms. This is making an important contribution to their scientific thinking and to the development of their knowledge and understanding.
173. Pupils work well together. Staff build up pupils' confidence thoughtfully. For example, the practical activities in Year 1 were quite closely organised but, in Year 2, staff gave pupils the opportunity to decide with whom they would work. In this, the vast majority showed a good sense of responsibility in applying themselves to what they had to do. Pupils asked questions of adults and each other. Higher attaining pupils were encouraged to take their thinking that bit further, to make predictions and to explain the reasons behind their ideas.
174. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was good. The good pace helped to keep pupils' attention clearly focused on what they had to do. At the time of the last inspection, pupils spent too long sitting on the carpet whilst teachers talked to them. The balance of listening and doing in the lessons seen was about right. There were many good opportunities for pupils to respond to questions to test that they understood instructions. Support staff are well deployed in lessons. The help they give to pupils is good, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, because it enables pupils to take a full part in activities and make similar progress. In the lessons seen, staff were successful in making learning in science fun. This is helping pupils to move forward.
175. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the subject and keeps plans under regular review. She ensures that there is appropriate coverage of the different aspects of science and she supports her colleagues in helping them turn these plans into successful lessons. Discussions with pupils indicate that there may be some differences in the rate of progress between classes. At present, the school's assessment procedures are not sufficiently developed to readily identify these shortcomings. However, the co-ordinator is aware of the areas in which teaching and learning need to be developed. This will help to develop good practice throughout the school.
176. At present, there is limited use of information and communication technology to support science. Pupils have insufficient opportunity to apply their skills in the subject. However, there is good application of literacy skills and numeracy skills are called upon as appropriate, although this is not always clear in teachers' planning.
177. Learning resources are satisfactory, but the lack of running water in some classrooms is a problem.

ART AND DESIGN

178. Standards of work are similar to those expected for pupils at the end of Year 2. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Given the well below standards when children start school, the vast majority of pupils, including those learning English as an additional language, achieve well. This is due to the current emphasis on the development of the art curriculum and to the high quality of the teaching.
179. Support from the Wednesbury Education Action Zone (WEAZ), through training for staff and specialist teaching in class, is making a very significant contribution to the pupils' good progress. Staff support pupils with special educational needs individually and in small groups. Consequently, they make good progress. All pupils have access to the full

curriculum. However, in some lessons, pupils are withdrawn for extra work in English. Whilst teachers try to ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement, the timing of these withdrawals disturbs pupils' concentration and slows the pace of learning.

180. In Years 1 and 2, teachers use their secure knowledge and understanding to introduce pupils to the works of famous artists. They use praise and encouragement effectively to build pupils' confidence to explore a wide range of exciting media. For instance, pupils in Year 1 are taught to look closely at the work of Arcimboldo. They notice the way he arranges vegetables to create a specific effect before they print a face in similar style. Higher attainers choose their vegetables by shape and size to create the desired effect. The teachers' enthusiasm is infectious. As a result, the pupils are interested and keen to do their best. Resources are well prepared and accessible, as when pupils in Year 1 arranged natural objects such as wood and stones to make sculptures in the style of Andy Goldsworthy. Teachers use questions carefully so that the pupils begin to extend their ideas with some imagination.
181. In Year 2, pupils are encouraged to explore in two and three dimensions, as well as using the computer. Teachers introduce the work of William Morris to increase awareness of pattern and line. They make the objectives of the lesson clear so that pupils know how to succeed and, as a result, work purposefully. The pupils concentrate hard, with varying degrees of control, to draw their designs in pencil. They enjoy mixing paint and produce a variety of shades. They are not yet competent in mixing a specific shade for a particular purpose. Pupils are not always challenged to make informed choices. For instance, they are presented with the right size of paintbrushes for the job. Some pupils explored pattern when making a textile collage, carefully choosing, arranging and attaching their shapes and decorating with sequins. Others use the computer. They select specific patterns to make their own repeated pattern. Whilst the teacher intervened to ensure pupils' computer skills were sufficient, she did not challenge pupils to develop their skills in evaluating and improving their art work.
182. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The specialist teacher from the Wednesbury Education Action Zone makes a very good contribution to raising the class teachers' expertise, as well as promoting the pupils' skills through direct teaching. Relationships are consistently good, so that pupils are confident to experiment without fear of failure. Pupils' work is valued and displayed carefully.
183. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The curriculum co-ordinators gain an overview of the school's performance through monitoring teachers' planning and reviewing work on display. Their roles in evaluating teaching and learning are not yet developed.
184. Teachers choose words carefully. They provide valuable opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in whole-class and paired discussion. Whilst teachers give clear instructions, the pupils' response often indicates a lack of understanding due to poorly developed speaking and listening skills. This slows their learning in art and design. In one class, good use was made of the computer and the digital camera as pupils explored patterns. Opportunities to collaborate with others promote social development well. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

185. By the end of Year 2, standards are similar to those expected nationally. The improvement in the subject reported at the time of the last inspection continues as a result of the fresh approach to teaching and learning being developed by the co-ordinator.

186. The school now places a much greater emphasis on the design element of pupils' work than at the time of the last inspection. The benefits of this are starting to come through in pupils' making work. Pupils now think much more clearly about the purpose of their design. Pupils in Year 2, for example, were working on a vehicle for 'Berty Bear', a character from their work in geography. Berty needed a vehicle to take him and his luggage around when he visits this country. This was their design brief.
187. As a class, pupils discussed this brief with their teacher and support staff. Staff made good use of questions and comment to get the pupils to explain their ideas and to use as many correct technical terms as possible. Staff then wrote these up on the marker board for future reference. Staff worked very hard to develop pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills in this forum. Teachers regularly reviewed the previous step with pupils. This is very important because many pupils have a short concentration span and do not always link a sequence of ideas together.
188. From the brief, the class developed a specification. Pupils were encouraged to research their ideas, perhaps by looking at books or at some existing models. In this way, they modified their ideas and changed their designs accordingly. Pupils' drawings reflect that they have spent time thinking about the brief. Pupils labelled different parts and wrote their ideas for the materials to use on the designs. Staff carefully supported these small steps in learning by asking questions and engaging pupils in discussion. There were regular pauses to ensure that all pupils were clear about what they had to do and, for example, to make good links with numeracy in using mathematical language, such as *longer*, *shorter*, *bigger* and *smaller*. Pupils are also encouraged to use numbers and measurements in their designs.
189. At the making stage, pupils work hard to realise their designs. They handle tools carefully and ask for help when they need it. They work well with each other and share equipment. A strength of their work is the enthusiasm and enjoyment boys and girls demonstrate. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good and they behave well in lessons, even when excited.
190. Some pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, find it hard to concentrate or to handle tools. Staff and other pupils give good support to help them. When necessary, support staff work with pupils in a one-to-one setting, adapting work well to meet the needs of the pupils. Staff also ensure that pupils for whom English is an additional language have the support they need. This ensures that all pupils are involved and that they have a product to show at the end of the topic.
191. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good. It was well planned, yet staff were flexible to pupils' needs. The pace of the lesson was maintained despite some unforeseen problems that pupils had with joining and sticking techniques. Opportunities for staff and pupils to discuss the progress made helps teachers gather useful assessment information to guide pupils' future learning and it also involves pupils in becoming more aware of their own learning.
192. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. In the lesson seen, progress was good because of the attention to systematically developing pupils' skills. In order for pupils to make better progress, closer links are needed between the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, so that skills are identified and developed as part of a continuous process from when children first start school. At present, staff have limited knowledge of the 'Stepping Stones for Learning' and the way in which these can be developed and built upon in older classes.
193. The co-ordinator is moving the subject forward well. She is working hard to develop this new approach to teaching design and technology and is enthusiastic for pupils to succeed.

There is limited application of information and communication technology as yet, although the co-ordinator is planning that pupils will photograph their work to build up a portfolio of designs. The school has a satisfactory range of resources to support its work. Satisfactory attention is paid to health and safety aspects. The absence of running water in one classroom causes some disruption to learning because pupils have to leave the classroom.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

194. By the end of Year 2, pupils reach similar levels to those expected nationally in both subjects. Progress is satisfactory.
195. Improvements in history have been made since the last inspection, when issues were related to 'patchy learning' and the need for a whole-school policy. In geography, standards and teaching are no longer unsatisfactory. New schemes of work are in place, which reflect national guidelines and provide for the more systematic development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. These help to ensure that pupils build upon their previous work, year on year. Geography and history are taught through a topic approach and teachers' plans now show clearly what is to be taught and learned.
196. In geography, pupils study maps and plans and make simple ones of their own. In a Year 1 class, pupils made good suggestions for improving the playground. They produced and labelled simple maps that showed their ideas. They were keen to put forward their ideas. Teaching in this lesson was good. It was conducted at a good pace, was well planned and built well on pupils' previous knowledge and skills. The teacher effectively drew on pupils' first-hand experiences of studying the local area. As a result, all pupils were able to identify with the purpose of the lesson and make good progress.
197. In history, pupils successfully develop historical skills and simple understanding of time lines. Work is well linked with geography and looks at how the school has changed over time. From this study, pupils in one Year 1 class move on to making simple time lines, which use photographs of the school to show 'now', 'a short while ago' and 'in the past'. Pupils look at how their surroundings and school life has changed over time. A seaside topic also follows a similar theme of 'now and then'. It draws upon the pupils' own experiences of holidays to help them make comparisons with the past and to enliven learning. Pupils particularly look at how buildings and environment have changed. They also compare a seaside town with their own area to broaden their geographical knowledge and understanding of other places.
198. In Year 2, pupils study an interesting group of people as they learn more about significant men and women in the past. Albert Pritchard, the founder of the school, Louis Braille and Helen Keller are included because of their links with education. Effective teaching in a lesson about Louis Braille enabled pupils to use role-play to empathise with the plight of his blind students. Having access to Braille books enhances learning. Many pupils try to explain the reason why people wanted change and what happened as a result. They also show a good knowledge of the subjects they are studying through writing reports about the achievement of their favourite person in the past.
199. Pupils work hard in history lessons and enjoy their learning. Although many are still developing confidence and competence with their speaking skills, teachers' good use of questioning, and an imaginative use of resources, encourages most groups to contribute. Good support in lessons for pupils with special educational needs helps them to make good progress. The choice of subjects for study in 'famous people from the past' is representative of different cultures and includes both men and women. Pupils from ethnic minority groups work steadily and make similar progress to other pupils.

- 200. Teaching in history is satisfactory. Now that the guidance of schemes of work is followed, there is appropriate coverage of the subject and clear planning in lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and manage lessons well. Often work is planned at different levels to meet the wide range of need in each class. Learning support assistants contribute effectively in lessons as they focus on work with individuals or in small groups.
- 201. No lessons were seen in geography due to the organisation of the topics, but scrutiny of planning and pupils' work indicates that teaching and learning are satisfactory.
- 202. The history co-ordinator is new to the role and is moving the subject forward effectively. The headteacher is co-ordinator for geography on a temporary basis. Resources for both subjects are adequate and accessible in lessons.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 203. Standards of work are similar to those expected nationally by the end of Year 2. They are similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection. An excellent scheme of work has recently been introduced, which supports teachers in planning for the systematic development of skills in all aspects of information and communication technology. In Years 1 and 2, carefully planned weekly lessons provide clearly focused hands-on experience for all pupils.
- 204. During the inspection, computers in almost all classrooms were switched on. However, they were seldom used to support learning in other subjects. Apart from the curriculum co-ordinator's class, opportunities to practise skills and to use information and communication technology are not well developed. Despite Internet links, there are few instances of using computers to search for information. At present, the subject does not make an effective contribution to pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy. Opportunities to share and collaborate in pairs promote social development.
- 205. The overall achievement of pupils is satisfactory. Some pupils on the higher stages of the special educational needs Code of Practice make good progress towards achieving their targets through the use of computers. Pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to other pupils.
- 206. Through their weekly lessons, pupils become increasingly confident in developing a range of skills. These include word-processing, communicating ideas, for example in art, and controlling a programmable toy. However, in discussion, pupils show little awareness of wider applications of information and communication technology outside school. In Year 1, pupils know that text can be entered using a keyboard. They explore colour, size and fonts when printing out their names. They know how to key in a capital letter and use 'backspace' to correct a mistake.
- 207. In Year 2, pupils build on these skills to edit, redraft, save and print their own poems. Whilst many pupils are confident, a significant minority continue to need adult help. When making patterns they use tools like 'paintbrush' and 'fill' as well as dragging and dropping techniques to communicate their ideas. They are keen to explain that a programmable floor robot works by following a sequence of instructions. Most make the robot move backwards and forwards, predict the outcome of their instructions and test the result. Almost all pupils are enthusiastic to talk about their work. Their confident attitudes to the subject are a significant factor in their learning.
- 208. Due to the organisation of the curriculum, no direct teaching of information and communication technology was seen during the inspection. The learning outcomes in terms of what pupils can do indicate that teaching is satisfactory. However, staff training

has not yet been completed and there is still a lack of confidence in applying information and communication technology skills to support everyday learning.

209. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The curriculum co-ordinator provides very good examples of using technology to enhance progress or consolidate learning, particularly in numeracy and art. Her role in monitoring teaching and learning is not yet developed. Opportunities for assessment are built in to the scheme of work, but are not used consistently to plan and adapt suitable work in all classes.
210. Resources are good. There is an adequate number of networked computer stations in classrooms as well as in the recently installed computer suite. Safety measures concerning access to the Internet are in place. Support from the Wednesbury Education Action Zone has helped the school considerably in increasing expertise and providing equipment. The interactive whiteboard is an excellent teaching aid, which stimulates interest and excitement and motivates pupils to learn. As yet, it is underused. The digital camera provides an extra dimension, its use enabling pupils to reflect on their own work, for instance in art and physical education.

MUSIC

211. It was not possible to see any music lessons in Year 2 during the inspection. Lessons in Year 1 were led by a specialist performing arts teacher from the Wednesbury Education Action Zone who is working this term with staff and pupils to develop composition and performance skills.
212. On the basis of the available evidence, standards are similar to those expected of pupils of these ages. Once a rhythm pattern is established, pupils successfully copy it using their hands, chanting and drums. Their concentration is improving as they intently follow the instructions and the example of the teacher. Many pupils have poor co-ordination and they find it difficult to maintain a steady beat for any length of time. Teachers effectively draw upon literacy and numeracy skills to support pupils' learning.
213. In the lesson seen, the teacher made good use of sound patterns to support the beat; for example, by encouraging the children to chant the phrase *'Mrs White had a fright'* as they clapped or played a *short-short-long, short-short-long* pattern. She effectively developed the rhythm pattern to *short-short-long, short-short-long, short-short short-short, short-short-long* matching this to *'Mrs White had a fright in the middle of the night'*. The way in which the teacher built the pupils' skills and confidence up, moving in small steps each time, was crucial to the success achieved.
214. In performance, pupils concentrated well and followed instructions carefully. One group sustained a steady pulse whilst the other performed the chant. The use of the sound beam, to add eerie electronic effects, captivated pupils. Pupils successfully experimented with different ways of creating and sustaining different effects. When listening to the recording of their performance, pupils could identify their own contributions.
215. The good progress made by most pupils in this lesson was due to the high quality of teaching. The well planned and carefully stepped development of skills ensured that pupils' interest was captured and harnessed to good effect. Very good subject knowledge and a good appreciation of the needs and capabilities of the pupils made a vital contribution to the success of this lesson. All pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, were well involved and supported in the lesson. Pupils for whom English is an additional language experienced no difficulty in taking a full part in this lesson.

216. There were, however, a number of pupils who missed all or most of the lesson seen. This was because they were withdrawn for additional help or support to address their special educational needs. This is unsatisfactory.
217. The school's plans provide for all aspects of the subject to be taught. The involvement of the Wednesbury Education Action Zone in the school is improving teachers' subject knowledge and understanding. It also makes a good contribution to the achievement of pupils, particularly in composing, which was highlighted as a weakness in the last report. The school's resources are adequate. Pupils benefit from the additional resources brought in by visiting specialists.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

218. Standards of work are similar to those expected nationally at the end of Year 2. They are similar to those found in the last inspection in March 2000. Due to the organisation of the curriculum, only dance and gymnastics lessons were observed. Teachers' planning shows that there is also appropriate coverage of the curriculum in games. In common with most infant schools, swimming is not taught.
219. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. They gain in control and co-ordination as they move through Years 1 and 2. However, the school does not have a framework for the systematic development of skills. This results in uneven rather than steady progress. Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs in lessons and pupils make satisfactory progress. The few pupils who learn English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress. Staff are sensitive to pupils' needs and ensure that all have full access to the curriculum.
220. Pupils in Year 2 respond imaginatively to music and co-ordinate their movements with control. In small groups, they reflect in short sequences of movement the pattern and shape of seashells. They share space carefully and mirror each other's movement with accuracy. Through the teachers' careful questions, pupils evaluate their own work and that of others, and sensitively suggest improvements.
221. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Lessons are carefully structured so that pupils practise skills before using them. For instance, in Year 1, pupils practised hopping, waddling and turning movements before incorporating them in a penguin dance. Teachers choose pupils as demonstrators to provide effective exemplars to help pupils improve the quality of their movements. Questions like, '*How can we help make her balance better?*', focus pupils' attention on skills.
222. Teachers use praise appropriately to keep all pupils on task and to encourage individuals to greater effort. The pupils respond positively and boys and girls work energetically together. In some lessons, the pace of learning slows when pupils spend too long listening to the teacher. The benefits of warming up are almost lost before they begin the main part of the lesson. Occasionally, pupils work noisily and valuable time is lost when they respond only slowly to the teacher.
223. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development in the opportunities it provides for pupils to collaborate in pairs and small groups. Good questioning is supporting pupils' skills in speaking and listening.
224. Management is satisfactory. The curriculum co-ordinator is only recently in post. She has much enthusiasm and a clear vision for the development of the subject. The curriculum co-ordinator monitors the teachers' plans to ensure all elements of the curriculum are taught, but does not yet monitor standards of teaching and learning in class. Recent

training is raising staff expertise. Assessment procedures are in place, but teachers do not use them consistently to plan future work.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

225. Standards at the end of Year 2 are similar to those prescribed in the locally agreed syllabus. At the time of the last inspection, standards were judged to be unsatisfactory. This was mainly because pupils did not have sufficient opportunity to make their own response to the different religious practices they learnt about. The school has now addressed this shortcoming.
226. In the lesson seen in Year 2, pupils were learning about the symbols in a Christian wedding ceremony. Pupils in this class are from a number of different faiths, but most recall attending a family wedding. They shared with a partner some particularly memorable part of the day. For example, one pupil had recently been a bridesmaid at her mother's wedding. The teacher had a good range of artefacts, including wedding clothes, an order of service and many photographs. These helped to strengthen pupils' understanding of the ceremony.
227. Pupils made sound progress. Those with special educational needs were well supported by staff, who helped them to contribute to discussions and prompted them with the correct vocabulary and names of the various items, where necessary. Sound regard was also paid to helping pupils for whom English is an additional language to understand the particular terms. The teacher placed careful emphasis in this lesson on promoting pupils' literacy skills. Pupils tackled difficult words such as 'bouquet' effectively with adult help and staff helped pupils to recall and remember this new vocabulary.
228. Teaching is satisfactory. The lesson seen was well prepared and, although pupils spent a long time sitting on the carpet, most concentrated carefully and were interested. Pupils with experience of civil or other faith ceremonies were effectively involved in the lesson by the teacher. She asked them to contribute any similarities or differences they remembered. This was effective in involving all pupils in the lesson. Although the time available for the pupils to complete their written work was limited, the choice of activity was suitable for the age and ability of most of the pupils in the class.
229. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus and its scheme of work is based on this. There is now a more systematic development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding than at the time of the last inspection. Assessment procedures have still to be developed and this is planned as part of the wider development in the school. The school has access to an appropriate range of learning resources for religious education.