

INSPECTION REPORT

CHERRY OAK SCHOOL

Selly Oak, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103626

Headteacher: Mrs Lesley Fowler

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jacque Cook
(OFSTED No: 2351)

Dates of inspection: 11 – 14 September 2000

Inspection number: 223628

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Severe and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	60 Frederick Road Selly Oak Birmingham
Postcode:	B29 6PB
Telephone number:	0121 472 1263
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Father David James
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jacque Cook (OFSTED No: 2351)	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
		Information and communications technology	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements
			How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well are pupils taught?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Marvyn Moore (OFSTED No: 11041)	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Kate Burton (OFSTED No: 10198)	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well is the school led and managed?
		Art	
		Design and technology	
		Equal opportunities	
Julia Coop (OFSTED No: 31862)	Team inspector	Foundation Stage	
		Geography	
		History	
		Music	
		Special educational needs	
Susan Hunt (OFSTED No: 27409)	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Physical education	
		Religious education	
		English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cherry Oak School is a comparatively small, mixed, day school for 48 children and pupils aged 3 to 11 with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. The numbers on roll have recently been reduced from 54 pupils. All children and pupils attending Cherry Oak School are able to move about without wheel chair provision, although a few use walking aids. There are 45 children and pupils on roll, 35 boys and ten girls. Currently there are nine children in the early years class, three aged under four, three of reception age (between four and five) and three in Year 1, (aged between five and six), although at the time of the inspection, two had yet to be admitted. *In the report, unless specifically referring to children aged under five, the term pupil will be used.* All pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need; 17 for profound and multiple learning difficulties. Additional special educational needs include visual or hearing impairment and behaviour difficulties. Fourteen pupils, 36 per cent, are from ethnic minorities. Ten of the 13 pupils with English as an additional language are in the early stages of language acquisition. The number of pupils of school age eligible for free school meals is high at 25 (56 per cent). Many pupils travel to the school from Birmingham inner city areas. There are two pupils from adjacent authorities.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Cherry Oak is an effective school where pupils do well and often very well, largely due to the high quality of the teaching. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide very good leadership and management ensuring the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils are well behaved, enjoy coming to school and work hard. They have very good relationships with staff, which gives them the confidence to try more difficult work.
- The quality of the teaching is high partly because teachers and support staff work very effectively together. It is very high for pupils aged five to seven (at Key Stage 1) and these pupils do very well indeed.
- Pupils make very good progress in mathematics, information and communications technology music and personal social and health education because they are taught very well in these subjects.
- A newly developed curriculum ensures all pupils have appropriate and exciting things to learn.
- Links with parents are very good.
- Clear procedures and very effective leadership ensure the school is very well managed.
- Outdoor facilities are very good and used well.

What could be improved

- The school improvement plan is only for one year and governors are not sufficiently involved in forward planning.
- Reports for parents on pupils' progress in certain subjects do not always state what pupils know, understand and can do.
- The sensory room is small and has insufficient ventilation.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997. Since the last inspection the school has made very good improvement in developing clear guidelines to help staff manage the more difficult behaviour of some pupils. Individual behaviour plans are devised and they work well. Pupils with difficult behaviour are now managed effectively. The quality of teaching is now monitored consistently and in consequence, during this inspection, there was an increased high level of teaching, no poor teaching and very little unsatisfactory teaching. This is a significant improvement. The curriculum has been successfully developed to ensure that there is adequate time for all subjects and pupils have equal opportunities to learn from what is taught. However, in order to achieve this, some lessons in the afternoon are now

too long. Very good progress has been made in improving what is taught. All subject policies have been reviewed and a programme is in place to revamp schemes of work completely in the light of new requirements. Two terms are complete for all subjects. The outlined two-year plan ensures pupils will not repeat work unnecessarily. Effective steps have been taken to ensure the curriculum is monitored well. Governors are now looking at what is being taught, participating in monitoring lessons. Very good progress has been made in ensuring curriculum co-ordinators are clear about their role and to enable them to develop their subject areas. As a result, pupils' standards in most subjects have improved.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	Key	
speaking and listening	B	A	Very good	A
Reading	C	B	Good	B
Writing	B	B	Satisfactory	C
Mathematics	B	A	Unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	B	A	Poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs	B	B		

Pupils make good progress towards meeting targets set for them: both in terms of 'P' scales (levels leading to National Curriculum levels) and in meeting those set on their individual education plans. Children aged under five make good progress in all areas of the Foundation Curriculum with the exception of creative and physical development where their progress is satisfactory. Pupils make very good progress throughout Key Stage 1. Pupils make very good progress overall in mathematics, information and communications technology, music and personal social and health education. Their progress is good in other subjects apart from history and religious education where it is satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes are good. Most pupils really want to learn and love coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good and at times very good. Occasional slips are quickly resolved and pupils work and play well together for almost all the time.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. At every opportunity, pupils want to help their teachers. They increase their confidence through meeting new people and develop very strong relationships with the adults that work with them.
Attendance	Very good improvement since the last inspection and recording shows all absences are for good reasons.

Pupils develop a keen desire to learn and show a curiosity about the world around them. Many pupils make considerable improvements in their behaviour. They learn very quickly what is acceptable and want to please their teachers.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5	Aged 5-11
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good

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

During the inspection, 96 per cent of the teaching was at least satisfactory and a very high 42 per cent was very good or excellent. In four per cent of lessons teaching was unsatisfactory.

Teaching and learning in the early years class, whilst satisfactory overall, is at times good notably in literacy and language and mathematical development. The best teaching is for pupils at Key Stage 1 and for those in the middle years, aged nine and ten, of Key Stage 2 (pupils aged seven to 11). The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics, information and communications technology, music and personal, social and health education are very good. Teaching and learning of English and science are good. Teachers plan their lessons well to ensure pupils' interest is gained and maintained through a range of different activities. Staff in each class work well together and build strong relationships with the pupils, which gives the confidence to learn and try new things. Communication and literacy are taught well and numeracy is taught very well. All subjects of the curriculum contribute to pupils' effective learning in these areas. The needs of all pupils, including those with additional special educational needs and those with English as a second language, are met well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good and very relevant for the pupils. It is enriched by very good use of the local community.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is good support for these pupils and their parents to enable them to help their children learn effectively.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Moral, social and cultural development is good and is taught well throughout the school day. Spiritual development is sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The level of care for pupils is good. Good behaviour and attendance are promoted very well. Assessment procedures have improved and are now very good in almost all areas of the curriculum.

The school has a very good partnership with parents and involves them particularly well through inviting them to sessions on areas such as signing and information and communications technology. The information provided for parents is very good in many respects but it is not clear from pupils' reports how well they are doing in a few subjects.

The curriculum is sufficiently broad and all subjects that should be are taught. This includes the Early Years Goals that make up the Foundation Curriculum for children aged under five. A wide range of

additional activities ensures learning is exciting and the special educational needs of pupils are met well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide very good leadership and management raising standards effectively in the school.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body is well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Responsibilities are fulfilled satisfactorily.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance very well.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used very well.

Levels of staffing, accommodation and learning resources are all good, although the sensory room is inadequate. Staff have a shared commitment to doing the best for the pupils. Monitoring is rigorous and very effective in raising standards of teaching and learning. Staff development through appraisal and in-service training is good and very good use is made of new technology. There are very few weaknesses apart from the short time span for the school improvement plan and the governing body is at the early stages of monitoring lessons and in strategic planning. The principles of best value are applied well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The feeling they can always approach the school for help. • That their children like coming to school and are expected to work hard. • That the school is well led and managed • The high quality of the information they receive from the school. • The Friday morning session for parents. • The good teaching and the encouragement given to pupils by both teaching and non-teaching staff. • The wide range of activities additional to usual lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work children are expected to do at home.

The inspection team supports the positive views expressed by the parents. Although much of the information provided for parents is of very high quality the annual reports on pupils' progress need some attention. Opinion regarding homework is divided. Some parents would like it set, others would not. However, the school states its policy in the prospectus that homework is not set as a rule, but parents may ask teachers for suitable activities if they wish. There is evidence that this happens for some children and what is set is suitable. Therefore, the concern is met by the action of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. It is inappropriate to judge the standards of the pupils for whom this school caters in relation to the National Curriculum or any other national benchmarks. The report does, however, report on the achievement of the pupils and on what they know, understand and can do. Judgements about achievement take account of information in their statements, annual reviews and individual education plans.
2. Overall the achievement and progress of pupils are good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. There are now very few instances where pupils do not make at least the progress they should. Additionally, there are far more instances where pupils make very good or excellent progress. This is particularly noticeable for most pupils in Key Stage 1 (aged five to seven), who, by the end of the key stage, have made very good progress because the quality of the teaching in class 1 is consistently of very high quality. Pupils achieve well and make good progress by the time they are 11.
3. There is no measurable difference between the achievement and progress of boys and girls. Most pupils with additional special educational needs, for example those who have behaviour difficulties, make good progress in learning to manage difficulties and respond appropriately to situations. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is due to the development and use of a consistent approach to helping these pupils. Pupils with English as a second language make similar rates of progress to their classmates. This is due partly to the teachers' emphasis on teaching language and also to the support offered by the classroom assistant who works specifically with these pupils and their parents.
4. Children aged under five are taught in a separate early years class. They make good progress in all areas of the Foundation Curriculum with the exception of creative and physical development where their progress is satisfactory. Their mathematical development in particular is promoted well and early mathematical concepts and language are taught through all curriculum areas. For example, during physical activities early mathematical language is introduced such as high and low, while in creative activities children are encouraged to make circles and lines. Children have opportunities to develop skills in well thought out structured activities. Language and literacy skills are taught well, and children with additional special educational needs learn to communicate through simple signing or gestures. Children's creative development, their knowledge and understanding of the world and personal and social development are supported through structured teaching activities, such as making rubbings of objects around the school. There are limited opportunities for children, to exercise simple choices, for example choosing from a small selection of play activities, or taking part in role-play on a regular basis. This limits children's opportunities to use their imagination and to learn through playing along side others.
5. In English pupils achieve well and make good progress. Standards have improved since the last inspection where there was little use of signing and picture vocabulary. The school has targeted the development of communication skills very well; staff have received training and pupils now make very good progress in improving their speaking and listening skills at both key stages. With the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy pupils pre-reading and pre-writing skills are being taught more systematically and in consequence pupils' progress is good. This is reinforced by staff teaching literacy skills effectively at every opportunity and in all lessons. During Key Stage 1 pupils follow instructions well and increase the signs, symbols and words they understand. They learn to listen attentively. For example, they use imaginative play to re-enact the story of 'The Big Train Ride', after hearing it read, showing they remember the sequence of events. They learn to manipulate a range of materials and some develop a pencil grip leading to making marks and lines. Higher attaining pupils begin to copy and

recognise some words. Pupils at Key Stage 2 continue to improve their speaking and listening skills and develop their vocabulary further. Their love of stories and poems leads to a clearer knowledge of how a book should be read. Many join in with words and phrases when they are reading with adults. They are beginning to use initial letters to help them and a few read simple words. Pupils' co-ordination improves and they make more controlled movements, for example with brushes and crayons. A few begin to write letters and words.

6. In mathematics pupils' achievement and progress are very good due to the high quality of teaching using the National Numeracy Strategy. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Younger pupils learn to clap as they count to ten and are beginning to point to and count objects. A few higher attaining pupils are able to count in twos and tens with the assistance of their teacher. All pupils practise their skills through singing and chanting rhymes; these activities are greatly enjoyed. They are increasingly better at recognising numerals and take part in matching and sorting games. They explore size, shape and colour. By the time they are 11, higher attaining pupils are beginning to recognise a few coins and count beyond 10 with greater confidence. Using a number line they arrange numerals in the correct order. Lower attaining pupils are learning the concept of one or more. They explore 'feely' boxes with one object, raise one finger during number rhymes and others start to make groups of two or more. All pupils enjoy using shapes to make patterns and pictures and a few can name circles and squares
7. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in science. During Key Stage 1, all pupils explore the properties of materials learning to use their senses effectively. They learn how to make a bulb light up in a circuit and can point to or name the correct parts of their body when asked. By the time they are 11, pupils know there is a relationship between energy and foods and look closely at similarities and differences in a range of situations. They learn about friction noting the effects of different surfaces on moving toys. Many comment on what they find out. Through continuing to get the best out of visits out of school to such places as farms and environmental centres, pupils have a wider understanding of the natural world. They have an awareness of the existence of different habitats and a few are able to say where and why some animals or insects live where they do.
8. At the last inspection, pupils' made satisfactory progress in information and communications technology. The prioritising of developing this area of the curriculum over the last three years has raised standards considerably and pupils' progress and achievement are now very good. Pupils' progress and achievement are also very good in music and personal, social and health education. In religious education progress and achievement are sound. In history it was not possible to make judgements about pupils' progress at Key Stage 1, but at Key Stage 2, their progress is satisfactory. In all other subjects, pupils make good progress and achieve well.
9. The school has set targets for each of its pupils using the National Curriculum and the 'P' scales which are levels leading to the National Curriculum levels. These targets are realistic and it is clear that pupils are making good progress towards achieving them. Similarly, pupils are making good progress towards meeting their targets on their individual education plans.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes to work are good. Parents comment that their children want to come to school. On arrival in the morning, pupils' faces light up when they greet the staff from their class. They are keen to learn and usually want to do their best for their teachers, co-operating with what they are asked to do. For example, when prompted by the teacher, a pupil at Key Stage 1 pushes Molly the puppet's hands together to help her clap another pupil reaches out to touch her and laughs when she moves. Most pupils try hard and concentrate on activities, although concentration spans are often short. In many lessons their anticipation of enjoyment really helps them to learn. They are curious and undaunted, for example to feel and move the bones of 'Skinny Sam' the life-size skeleton, to explore objects using a magnifying glass or to feel the textures of a range of materials. They follow lights and study bubble columns in the sensory room and search for objects hidden under a cloth. There are occasional instances where

pupils lose interest, usually because they are waiting too long for the teacher to organise resources.

11. The behaviour of pupils is good overall. At times it is very good, particularly when they are engrossed in what they are doing, for example, threading red items or trying really hard to remember a sequence of numbers. Whilst they may leave their seats when they are not supposed to, they quickly return when asked or are helped to do so. At the swimming pool, pupils behave in an orderly manner and they change with a minimum amount of fuss. In every class there are pupils who are learning to improve their behaviour with the help of specific plans. It is evident that many of these pupils are making tremendous progress in learning what is acceptable. Occasionally pupils fall out with each other but when staff intervene invariably the pupils concerned know they are not being kind. They hang their heads and say sorry. In a very few instances pupils misbehave in lessons because they are not being taught appropriately.
12. The very good relationships pupils build with their teachers and support staff are a key element in helping them to learn. This leads to expressions of joy and humour, for example, laughing at the popping balloons or pretending not to have a number in mathematics. Pupils find lessons fun and enjoy the praise and encouragement of supportive adults. It is noticeable that pupils have a high degree of confidence. They will communicate with visitors, participate in action songs and most try new activities with enthusiasm. Many pupils learn relatively quickly to share toys and equipment and work or play alongside others. They are willing to take the dinner numbers to the secretary and help put equipment away at the end of the lesson. Some have specific jobs to do at lunchtime, which they are proud to undertake.
13. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour maintain the standards achieved at the last inspection, but relationships and personal development have clearly improved.
14. The attendance is very good at 92.7 per cent even though this is under the 95 per cent expected of schools because pupils only stay away if they have to. The figure represents a very good improvement since the last inspection. There is no unauthorised absence and no pupils have been excluded over the last few years, On the whole, the transport gets pupils to school on time and almost all pupils are in school by five past nine at the latest. Punctuality to lessons is very good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching and learning remain at the same good level overall as reported at the last inspection. However due to the effectiveness of monitoring of teaching and the introduction of such initiatives as the National Numeracy Strategy, there have been considerable improvements. The percentage of very good and excellent teaching has increased considerably and there are now very few lessons where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. This confirms the positive views expressed by parents. The teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 are very good in almost all lessons and in a significant number of lessons they are excellent. This provides a very good grounding for the pupils. Although overall, the teaching and learning are good at Key Stage 2, they are very good in the class for pupils aged nine and ten. In the early years class, the teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and at times good. In particular the teaching and learning of language and literacy and the development of mathematical skills are good.
16. In most subjects the teaching and learning is good. The exceptions are mathematics, information and communications technology and music, where teaching and learning are very good and religious education where teaching and learning are sound.
17. Lessons are planned well to include activities that are suitable for all the pupils and ensure they learn. Whilst most sessions start with the class together, they then usually divide into groups. In this way each pupil receives more attention and an appropriately difficult level of work. For

example, in a mathematics lesson after a start together as a class, three groups were formed. The first ordered the numbers one to ten and practised writing them. The second threaded numbers of objects and the third group worked on number rhymes. On a number of occasions during the week pupils are taught individually. In the early years class, a nursery nurse works on specific programmes meeting targets in English and mathematics from individual education plans for each pupil, one at a time. One reason the group work is so effective is because the teachers and support staff work so well together. There are very few instances when support staff are not extremely effective. This is remarkable because at the time of the inspection, some staff had not been working together for very long. Support staff are clear about what the teacher wants them to do. Most have attended a wide programme of training and are very skilled. This is particularly noticeable in the way pupils are encouraged to do their best and to behave well. Pupils are dealt with in the same way by the staff that work with them so they know what to expect. Strategies from behaviour plans are consistently applied to help those with difficult behaviour to conform. Pupils are successfully distracted to concentrate on an activity and are praised at every opportunity. This ensures they complete tasks and it makes them more confident. Relationships between the staff and the pupils are very good. Staff set a good example to the pupils; they smile, are positive and insist individuals are listened to.

18. It is noticeable that in the most effective lessons, the enthusiasm of the teachers transfers to the pupils. Interest is aroused and pupils become excited and keen to learn more. Lessons are fun. For example, at the beginning of a design and technology lesson the teacher told the pupils she had something really exciting for them and asked them to guess what it might be. They guessed 'toys' and 'yes they were going to see how they worked'. They could hardly wait to get started. In all lessons, tasks are explained very clearly, so pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Staff use questions skilfully to draw out answers and to check understanding. In order to ensure pupils make links from previous lessons to the next, earlier learning is referred to and summaries are made at the end of the lesson during plenary sessions. Pupils' concentration is enhanced through a careful choice of resources. For example, pupils love Molly the puppet at Key Stage 1 and a model of a rattlesnake stimulates interest in Key Stage 2. Teachers are knowledgeable and whatever the subject being taught basic skills are taught as well. Initial letter sounds are used to prompt memory, items are counted during registration and social skills of saying please and thank you are emphasised. Signs and symbols are used well to help pupils communicate and to reinforce learning. The use of songs and rhyme is also very effective. For example, pupils are helped to remember the order of numbers or to understand the effects of 'sticky, sticky sweets' on their teeth. Staff are aware of those pupils with English as an additional language and ensure they are learning in the same way as the others in the class.
19. Assessment is used well. Lessons are evaluated and used to plan what will happen next. In the early years class, records are kept for each child during the day. This provides a great deal of information including some that records how well the children are doing.
20. In the very few instances where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory this is usually because the long afternoon lesson time is not used well and pupils' interest wanders. Some teachers talk for too long expecting pupils to sit and listen and they became restless. Other times pupils misbehave because they do not receive sufficient attention from the member of staff working with them. Whilst resources are to hand in the best lessons, in a few lessons time is wasted collecting together necessary equipment, for example, to taste food and drink in a science lesson.

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

21. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good throughout the school. All pupils have access to a broad range of relevant and appropriate learning experiences. These include all subjects drawn from the new National Curriculum 2000, the Foundation Curriculum and religious education. The new combination of personal, social and health education and

citizenship is included extremely well. Sex education and awareness of the misuse of drugs are included appropriately as part of personal social and health education.

22. The curriculum for the under fives is suitably planned around the six areas of learning and the Early Learning Goals established for the Foundation Curriculum for children under five. It provides a satisfactory, highly structured approach to children's learning and development, with well-planned supervised activities. However, the lack of sufficient structured free choice of activities limits children's progress in creative development, while similarly the restricted use of the outdoor play area limits children's physical progress
23. Good progress has been made in addressing issues raised in the previous inspection, particularly in relation to increasing the time spent on history, science and design and technology. The start of the school day has been changed, however, the afternoon sessions are now often timetabled for just one subject and this is frequently too long. Sometimes pupils become bored and difficult to teach successfully. In order to prevent this, some teachers do not plan to use the full time allocated. For example, a science lesson lasted for forty-five minutes and the remainder of the session was used for personal and social education. As a result, over the year teaching time for some subjects is considerably shortened.
24. Very good progress has been made in improving what is taught. There is now an outline two-year plan, which ensures pupils' learning, continues from one year to the next without unnecessary repetition. This is a particular aid for teaching the mixed aged groups in each class. The school has piloted the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) schemes of work, which are being used selectively and with modifications for science and the foundation subjects. In addition, an accredited baseline assessment for primary pupils was piloted and is now used by the school in English, mathematics and personal social and health education. This has given teachers clear information in order to plan an appropriate curriculum for each pupil. Subject co-ordinators have written two terms of detailed schemes of work. They monitor what is being taught and use the information gained when writing the following term's schemes.
25. Since the last inspection the school has had Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant (EMTAG) standard funding for a bilingual classroom assistant who gives valuable support for ethnic minority pupils. Close attention has been paid to the important development of communication skills. Objects of reference, signing and symbols are all used well and effectively to assist pupils to communicate their choices, wishes and ideas. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection when the lack of signing and symbols was criticised.
26. The curriculum is enhanced through a good range of initiatives. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are both very effective. They have been adapted successfully for the needs of the pupils in the school. Information and communications technology is used well and includes Internet access through the Birmingham Grid for Learning. During the past twelve months a number of co-ordinators including those for, English, mathematics, science, history, information and communications technology, physical education and religious education have held focus weeks to highlight the importance and relevance of their subjects. Pupils spend a whole week concentrating on one subject. Pupils have, for example, tasted Viking food and played with old-fashioned toys during a history focus week and this has helped them to understand that life in the past was different. During the literacy week help with improving pupils' reading was given by a range of adults including parents, lunchtime assistants and friends of the school who looked at books with pupils and heard some read
27. Very good use is made of a wide range of opportunities to extend pupils' experiences outside school. Parents commented that this aspect was particularly beneficial for their children. Recent visits to a fire station and farm are well recorded. They illustrate the good quality of planning that the staff put into such events in order to ensure that the maximum benefits are available for all pupils. Each week, nine pupils go donkey riding to the specialist centre at Sutton Park. This serves to improve co-ordination and confidence for these pupils. Certificates awarded by the centre clearly show the improvements they make. This facility is freely available to all pupils and their families from the school during holiday times. The school has

also adopted a donkey from the stables and he appeared as a 'prop' in the Nativity play last Christmas in a local Church. Even the youngest children have an opportunity to participate in a residential trip each year as well as older pupils. These experiences improve social skills notably. The school works with outside agencies particularly charitable organisations to arrange holidays for pupils and their families to go away together. In a further development, this year the school successfully bid for 'New Opportunities Funding'. This money is used for pupils to have days out each holiday to local places of interest, for example, the Sea Life Centre and Cannon Hill Park. It is organised and run by two nursery nurses and additional staff from the school.

28. Pupils have a very good range of experiences that reflect the school's aims and values very well. The provision of inclusion is good. Older pupils attend a local primary school for their weekly physical education lesson. There are strong links made through the Careers and Education Business Partnership based at Bournville College. They support pupils with contacts and information providing an added enrichment to their curriculum such as an electricity day for the pupils in science. The local community is used very well. For example, there are links with the West Midland Police and visits to Bournville Lane Police Station. The school is well supported by outside agencies. Regular visits by a physiotherapist with a trained 'in house' assistant working each day with certain pupils provides a good service. A weekly visit by a speech therapist has increased the accessibility of the curriculum to all pupils with improved communication aids including Makaton, Derbyshire Language Scheme and Boardmaker. Successful in-service training has been jointly planned and presented by speech therapists and staff.
29. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is sound. Collective worship takes place each afternoon in class. There are spiritual moments when music is played and pupils reflect and say simple prayers. One pupil led the prayers for his class. Members of staff take time to seek out and listen to the views and ideas of the pupils, whether expressed vocally or by actions. It is made clear that they value what pupils say and feel which encourages pupils to similarly value views and beliefs. Opportunities are made for pupils to appreciate the wonders of nature. They visit farms looking at young animals and marvel for example, at the sheer size of cows in relation to themselves. They are shown how to use magnifying glasses to look closely at insects. One class passed a large shell round the group feeling its shape and showing their appreciation of the colouring and beauty.
30. There is an improvement since the last inspection in the provision for pupils' moral development, which is now good. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong effectively and the staff provide good role models. Pupils are expected to be truthful and to respect all forms of life. For example, being gentle with small animals and allowing a dragon fly its freedom. Teachers and support staff take time to talk to pupils about their behaviour. They emphasise that misbehaviour makes them 'sad' and this is very effective because pupils want to please the adults they work with. Pupils with behaviour difficulties have effective behaviour support plans to help them improve their behaviour.
31. Pupils' social development is good. They are encouraged to be courteous, considerate and polite to one another, to staff and visitors. Opportunities are given for them to share their work with their class and also with the whole school during assembly. Lunchtimes are organised very well to develop a family atmosphere and help pupils to develop good table manners. Many pupils also have jobs to do during this time, for example, helping to clear tables. The good level of staffing at lunchtime and playtime ensures pupils play well together in the playground and in their lunchtime activity sessions. These sessions are very effective in helping pupils to become more co-operative. In one instance, staff gave some pupils with difficult behaviour soap solution to blow bubbles at each other. This was a great success causing a great deal of laughter and chatter during this time. There are good opportunities throughout the school for developing independence skills and these are clearly identified in individual education plans. Dressing and undressing skills are taught in physical education and swimming lessons. The curriculum for personal social and health education and citizenship also develops social skills well helping pupils to work co-operatively and to take turns.

32. Cultural development and provision is good. Pupils are introduced to a range of different cultures varying from local interest to wider world perspectives. Pupils visit local places of interest including the park and an environmental centre. They consider English heritage through history and the geography lessons. They go to the local church to do some brass rubbings. Pupils participate in the South Asian Arts and Music Project by watching the South Asian Music Project Group (SAMPAD) at the Symphony Hall in Birmingham. During the physical education focus week African Caribbean dancers visited the school. Additionally, American line dancers and an Irish traditional dancer visited the school to give demonstrations. During the religious education focus week pupils joined in celebrations of the Chinese New Year. Throughout the year pupils explore the work of local and international artists and sculptors in art lessons. In music lessons they listen to classical and modern pieces. Books are carefully chosen for the literacy hour to ensure the cultural dimension is emphasised.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The health, welfare and safety of the pupils are good and treated as a high priority by the school. Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure the safety and welfare of the pupils. The school has adopted the health & safety policy and checklist of the local authority. Regular checks are carried out to see that the school is a safe and secure place and attention is given to outstanding matters. This ensures the provision of a good environment in which the pupils can work. Medical needs of the pupils are taken very seriously and there are weekly visits by the school nurse and fortnightly visits from the school doctor.
34. The child protection policy is comprehensive and well documented and all staff are aware of the procedure and adhere to it vigorously. The extremely caring attitude of the staff is reflected in the high level of support and care given to pupils and their response is accordingly good. This contributes well to their academic and pastoral development.
35. Monitoring of attendance is very good. The school has one register, which is completed accurately and is monitored by the school secretary. There are very good procedures for notification of absence and the very good relationship between the school and the parents ensures they are followed. The escorts, who accompany pupils to and from school provide a good link between parents and the school in the morning if a pupil is unexpectedly absent. The education welfare officer regularly visits the school and extremely good liaison takes place between the school and the appropriate agencies for any matters of concern.
36. Pupils' behaviour is managed very well and the detailed policy on behaviour is vigorously adhered to and applied by all staff. The sensitive manner, in which difficult behaviour by some pupils is dealt with by staff, ensures that the atmosphere in school is calm and controlled and pupils are able to learn in a confident and secure manner. As parents pointed out, oppressive behaviour is not tolerated and high levels of supervision at all times ensure any misunderstandings are dealt with quickly and effectively. Individual behaviour plans are used very effectively to ensure staff deal with difficulties in a consistent way, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Plans are regularly monitored and updated ensuring pupils' behaviour improves. The lunchtime assistants work extremely well with the pupils and individual plans for each child are prominently displayed in the dining room in order that staff may assess the level of care for each child required during mealtimes
37. Pupils' academic performance and personal development are monitored well. A very good assessment is made when pupils enter the school and this is used as a baseline to track their progress. The results of the assessment and the gains made each year are plotted on graphs for each pupil. This provides a very clear picture of what has been achieved and the time it has taken. It is then used as a basis for planning what needs to be taught next. Individual education plans provide a further effective means of monitoring pupils' progress. They are regularly updated and new targets are set. Each lesson is evaluated and comments made on the progress pupils have made in order to plan the next stage of learning. In the early years class, staff record what children have achieved throughout each day on weekly sheets for each

child. This provides a wealth of information but does not always record how well children are doing. Each member of staff has a number of children drawn from all classes to monitor and this is particularly helpful in gauging the progress pupils are making at all ages.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The school's partnership with parents is extremely effective. Parents have expressed the view that they are very satisfied with the work the school does with their children. They know that their youngsters are safe and happy and the school provides an appropriate environment for their children's welfare. They feel that they can contact the school at any time to discuss problems or issues that they wish to raise and are particularly appreciative of the positive attitude of the headteacher and staff towards them.
39. A regular Friday meeting of all parents at the school is arranged at which parents are invited to contribute to discussions regarding general matters affecting the welfare of their children. The school also arranges, by request, a variety of interesting speakers who are able to give valuable information to parents about the wellbeing of their children and a variety of educational matters. This is very successful and much appreciated by parents, as they do not have daily opportunities to meet at the school gate because their children are transported to school. A number of parents help with swimming or lunchtime supervision. Through attending training on how to use the new technology, some parents are able to assist with the presentation of work using equipment such as scanners and laminators.
40. The prospectus provided by the school for parents is of a high quality, being parent friendly and containing all the information that parents need to know regarding school procedures and the opportunities provided for their children. Regular newsletters are produced which are of a high quality and give parents constant updates regarding activities which the school promotes and observations provided by the school to ensure pupils progress. Individual education plans are prepared by the school in conjunction with parents and any comments or contributions that parents wish to make regarding these plans are taken fully into account by the school. These plans and meetings with parents for pupils' annual reviews provide good information about their child's progress. However, whilst written reports give good information concerning the progress of pupils in most subjects including the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communications technology in some other subjects it is not so clear. Information given does not detail progress as largely the content of the lessons is recorded, rather than what pupils know, understand and can do.
41. The concern felt by a small minority of parents, regarding the provision of homework, was not felt to be substantiated. The school's policy, as stated in the prospectus, is not to give homework to pupils. However, if they wish, parents may ask homework to be set. For example, signs and symbols to be learnt are sent home. The efforts made by the school to promote partnership with parents, is very good. Parents feel that because of the strong links they have with the school and the good supply of information, that they are confident with the schools provision for their children and feel that they are fully supported by the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The headteacher is a far-sighted and consultative leader. She has clear views about the possible future for the school and encourages all staff to participate fully in planning for school improvement. She works most effectively with the deputy headteacher and together they provide very good leadership and management. Effective teamwork and very good relationships are key features of the school; it is a very cohesive and supportive staff. There are agreed aims and values and there is a consistent approach to working with the pupils that is shared by all. All members of staff are very clear about their roles and responsibilities, which is an improvement since the last inspection when this was an issue for action. Co-ordinators

are developing their subjects effectively. The deputy headteacher, who has overall responsibility for the curriculum, ensures that all subjects are allocated sufficient time and systematically monitors and evaluates this area of school life.

43. High standards are clearly promoted and the school is very keen to be involved in new initiatives. Their work with student teachers, nursery nurses and other professionals continually introduces them to new ideas and causes them to critically examine their practice as they explain what they do to the many visitors they welcome to the school. As a result of winning bids from the local authority, members of staff have successfully carried out research projects, for example, on the inclusion of pupils with severe learning difficulties in mainstream schools. This work is very relevant, as inclusion is likely to feature further in the school's future plans.
44. There is a very good system for monitoring the work of teachers and the standards of pupils' work. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when this was a key issue. The headteacher and deputy headteacher regularly evaluate the work of teachers in their classrooms. A record of observations is maintained and staff who are monitored have a chance to discuss their work afterwards. Some subject co-ordinators also observe lessons and give subject advice to their peers. Areas for development are identified through this rigorous monitoring and action is taken. For example the adviser for design and technology was invited into the school to help to improve teaching in this subject. The deputy headteacher keeps a record of all pupils whose work is celebrated during the good work assembly and questions teachers if any pupils are overlooked. Senior managers and subject co-ordinators monitor schemes of work and lesson plans. All reports are read by the headteacher. The deputy headteacher is developing ways of collating assessment information and presenting data in graphical form that effectively illustrates pupils' progress or lack of it. All information on the work of the school and the achievement of pupils is presented to the governing body.
45. All members of staff meet annually with the headteacher to review their work and plan for the future. Although informal, this system of appraisal is effective and members of staff are able to discuss what has gone well and identify areas for improvement. There is a culture of training and development in the school. Staff development is identified and records show a range of training opportunities. All members of staff are encouraged to go on courses and improve their skills. Therefore, the work of the school is very purposeful and as the classroom assistants commented, 'everyone endeavours to do their best for the pupils'. Training days in school involve all staff and have focused on identified priorities and national initiatives such as literacy and numeracy. Some particularly effective training has been provided on behaviour management, an area identified as a weakness at the last inspection. Although not formalised, the procedures for the induction of new staff are effective. An opportunity for a new member of staff to shadow her predecessor was provided and this together with the informative staff handbook enabled her to take up her new post successfully.
46. Short-term development planning is very good but there are no definite longer-term plans. Through consultation with all members of staff and the governing body, senior managers draw up the school improvement plan. Targets are set for the forthcoming year and progress towards these is monitored rigorously by those with the identified responsibility. Funding is allocated accordingly and training needs are identified. All national initiatives are reflected in the schools' annual targets together with pilot schemes, for example developing the use of "P" scales for assessing the work of pupils. The school is therefore at the forefront of educational thinking and following careful evaluation of its performance seeks ways to improve. Targets set for the previous year were met successfully. The longer four-year plan for information and communications technology, which is now in its final year, demonstrates how effectively the school can prioritise and plan its work relating these to decisions on spending. Action has been taken on all the key issues identified at the last inspection. However, there is an understandable barrier to planning in detail for more than one year due to pending local and national changes in provision for pupils with special needs.
47. The governing body is supportive and more involved in the life of the school since the last inspection. Visits to monitor aspects such as classroom climate, discipline and literacy are

helping the governors to be more aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are also very well informed through the documentation that is presented to them and from discussions with members of staff. They have approved all the new policies and schemes of work that the school has developed in response to the last inspection and to the requirements of the revised National Curriculum. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well. However, there remains a need for the governing body to further develop its strategic involvement in the development of the school and planning for the future.

48. The school has a cautious approach to budgeting with the current predicted underspend representing 11.9 per cent of the total allocated funds. However a forecast on spending for the next three years shows predicts a gradual erosion of this surplus. Given the uncertainty around the future role of the school this caution is justifiable and offers a degree of flexibility. The school is well resourced and best use had been made of funding to provide a stimulating environment in which pupils and teachers work. Senior managers and governors are very well aware of the importance of seeking value for money and this is effectively communicated to all staff. The good range of resources made by staff or bought from local markets illustrates the school's prudence. The school administration is efficient and is making very good use of new technology. A recent audit report describes the school's financial procedures as sound. Issues were identified for action and the school is taking steps to remedy these omissions.
49. The school is generously staffed. The number, qualifications and experience of the teaching staff are well matched to the needs of the pupils and the demands of the curriculum. The support staff are particularly well trained and a good number have qualifications such as National Vocational Qualifications and Nursery Nurse Education Board. The school is also fortunate to have the support of a speech and language therapist, a music therapist, a bilingual classroom assistant and trained assistant for physiotherapy. The accommodation is good and provides a stimulating learning environment. It has been much improved since the last inspection. The toilets have been refurbished and now afford pupils privacy. There is a new information and communications technology room. The building is bright, clean and very well maintained by the site manager. However the sensory room is very small and inadequately ventilated. It is restrictive as it can only be used by a maximum of two pupils and a member of staff at any one time. The playgrounds and gardens are safe and well fenced. They contain a lovely range of imaginative play equipment, notably musical instruments in the sensory garden, which were made by an artist in residence. Resources are very good for mathematics and music. They are good for all other subjects except history and also in the library where they are satisfactory. The school makes very good use of local facilities and the environment. Overall, the quality of the staffing, the accommodation and the learning resources have a positive effect on pupils' learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. In order to raise standards further the headteacher, deputy headteacher staff and governors should:
- Write a school improvement plan to cover a longer period and ensure the governing body is more involved in the forward planning of the school; (paragraphs 46, 47)
 - Use the very good examples of English, mathematics, science and information and communications technology reporting to ensure that annual reports on pupils' progress state what pupils know understand and can do rather than what the lessons have been about; (paragraphs 40, 67, 72, 75, 78, 87, 94, 107)
 - Improve the facilities for using the sensory equipment. The converted space currently used is too small and inadequately ventilated. (paragraphs 49, 66, 76)

51. The governors, in drawing up their action plan, may wish to consider the following points relating to minor weaknesses identified in the report:
- The provision of creative and physical development for the early years class is not as good as the other areas; (paragraphs 4, 22, 52, 53, 59, 60)
 - Recording of pupils' progress in history requires development at Key Stage 1; (paragraph 87)
 - Some afternoon lessons are too long for pupils to spend learning one subject; (paragraphs 20, 23, 76, 89, 90)
 - There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. (paragraphs 15, 20, 65, 102)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
13	29.5	24	29.5	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	45
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	25

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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 and at the end of Key Stage 2

There were too few pupils to enable publication of this information

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	9
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	1
White	25
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: N – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.6
Average class size	9

Education support staff: N – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	391

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	582937
Total expenditure	546927
Expenditure per pupil	12154
Balance brought forward from previous year	36660
Balance carried forward to next year	72670

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	46
Number of questionnaires returned	23

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	30	0	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	48	43	4	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	26	0	0	26
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	13	17	26	0	43
The teaching is good.	65	26	0	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	26	9	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	30	0	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	30	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	57	35	0	0	9
The school is well led and managed.	74	26	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	26	4	0	13
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	61	30	4	0	4

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

52. At the time of the inspection there were five children under five years old and two pupils aged six attending the early years class. One child was absent during the inspection and in the week following the inspection a further two children were due to be admitted to the class. Two of the children, having only attended for a few days were in the very early process of settling into the new environment. Already however, because of good support from caring staff, these children appeared happy and had settled down well into the highly structured daily routines. The quality of the provision is good in all areas except creative and physical development, which is satisfactory. The class is very well resourced with a wide range of high quality toys and equipment; a cosy quiet room provides a safe secure environment where children are greeted at the beginning of each session. A messy area provides an ideal place to explore a range of supported and supervised creative activities. However, while there is also a large open class area, this has not been fully developed in order to provide an inviting, stimulating and exciting area for children to play and learn. For example, there is no home corner for children to experience pretend situations and there are tables and chairs stacked around the room. The very well resourced outside play area is in addition, only used for a short period each day.
53. Children begin the early years class with very low levels of language skills, personal independence, and immature behaviour. This is confirmed by the high quality initial assessments undertaken on entry, which fully inform staff of children's developmental milestones reached in all areas of the Foundation Curriculum. By the time children reach the age of five, they have made good progress in all areas of learning with the exception of creative and physical development where progress is satisfactory. Continuous daily evaluations assist staff in tracking children's experiences, which provide some evidence of how well children are doing but often concentrate too fully on what children have experienced.
54. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and on occasions good. This is not as high as at the last inspection when teaching was good overall. Early morning and afternoon routines in particular are warm welcoming experiences, which support children's emotional, language and mathematical development in a positive way. There are well planned and highly structured activities where children, supported by a member of staff, are successful in learning specific skills. A nursery nurse is particularly skilled in helping children meet targets on their individual education plans. Constant praise and encouragement ensures children are keen to do what she asks. Where children are not directly taught, their learning is less successful. This is because the large classroom is not organised into a stimulating learning environment. A range of activities are set out using the space and although some will spend time, for example, with the teacher building towers with blocks, time is wasted as children wander aimlessly around the room. Choices are not sufficiently well defined to help children make a decision about what to do bearing in mind those that have recently joined the class need support to do this. Consequently, opportunities for the personal and social development of children, through exercising simple choices, and unstructured social interaction, are not sufficiently available. Opportunities for creative development are missed. Many children have short concentration spans and this is not well managed in the large space where they move away from activities, sometimes climbing onto tables and chairs.

Personal, Social and emotional development

55. Nearly all the children enter the nursery with very immature skills in personal and social development. Through, the support and encouragement from all members of staff, children make steady progress, and are becoming increasingly independent by the time they reach the age of five. They are, for example, encouraged to help by taking the register slip to the office accompanied by a member of staff, and to communicate by signing or words to make a choice of snack at break time or to indicate when they need to visit the toilet. They are able to pour their own drinks with support and show pleasure in their achievement. Adults provide very

good role models, and because of this children learn to relate to the staff and each other in a caring way. Children, who experience difficulties controlling their emotions and behaviour, are very well supported through individual behaviour plans, which are used consistently, and successfully by staff. Limited opportunities to exercise choice, when playing, however, detract from the otherwise good provision.

Communication, language and literacy

56. Many children start in the nursery with no language or communication skills. All staff however, use talk and signing to good effect and always praise and support children's efforts to communicate their needs. Because of this children make good progress and although many remain having very limited communication skills, higher attaining children can use simple words, phrases and gestures to communicate. By the time they reach five, for example, joining in simple songs and poems with words and signs. Children take pleasure in looking at books, know how to turn the pages carefully and enjoy looking at the pictures. Additionally they improve their hand control in order to make lines and circles on paper. Children with additional special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, begin to use simple signs or gestures to communicate when they want a biscuit, for example. Opportunities however to improve their communication skills, through role-play for example, are limited, and children have few opportunities to learn through playing along side each other, without direct adult intervention.

Mathematical development

57. Children learn early mathematical language and skills well, because of the skill of the teacher who uses every opportunity to support children's learning, through high quality, activities. Through rhymes and simple games, for example, hiding a teddy under a parachute, and playing peek-a-boo, children experience counting to three and learn to anticipate when the count of three has been reached. Children clearly enjoy these kinds of games and respond with obvious joy, laughing and clapping their hands. Higher attaining children can join in counting to three, and can count to five confidently, while children with additional special educational needs, recognise when three has been reached.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world increases well throughout their time in the nursery. They explore the world around them through activities that use all their senses, for example, they experience different textures, by examining and playing with coloured rice, shredded paper in glue and coloured sawdust. Understandings of sounds around them are developed through well thought out activities that use a variety of musical instruments. They learn about their bodies when singing and playing games using dolls and mirrors. When hunting 'Erin the bear' who has been hidden in the school grounds by staff, children are able to explore the wider school environment. Visits to a local snoezelen room, or using the multi-sensory room situated at school allows children to explore sound and light in safe relaxing environments

Physical development

59. Children have satisfactory opportunities to develop their physical development through planned activities supported by a member of staff. On these occasions, satisfactory teaching encourages children to choose between three objects to practise throwing or spinning quoits for example. Children enjoy exploring movements and show obvious enjoyment when they succeed in a task. The teaching of positional language, for example, up, down, is used effectively by the teacher. However, because of the children's limited attention spans, often they become distracted, and fail to gain the most from the learning situation. Physiotherapy sessions make a valuable contribution to the physical development of the children, as do opportunities to visit the hydrotherapy pool and swimming baths. The well-resourced outdoor play area is used effectively at playtimes when children are able to explore a wide range of

equipment, and play with balls and push toys for example. However, opportunities for prolonged and regular access to the outdoor play area are limited and further opportunities to develop, physical, and personal independence skills are missed.

Creative development

60. Children make satisfactory progress in their creative development. They have planned opportunities to develop creative skills, but limited organised opportunities to explore a range of play situations without teaching intervention. They do make patterns in textured paint on tables, for example, exploring shapes and lines and creating patterns with their fingers, which also helps to develop and improve co-ordination. Sand is available on a planned basis for play in the messy area. While, one to one play situations with a member of staff allow children to mimic feeding the dolly, there is a lack of stimulus to move further into role-play and pretend situations. Musical instruments are used effectively in planned teaching sessions when children can explore sounds and rhythm. Where teaching is more successful children are allowed access to a limited range of equipment. They explore the capabilities of musical instruments and enjoy making noises. Role-play and toys are restricted for use with staff support and this limits children's creative and social development. When, not interested in planned activities, children often wander aimlessly around the large open room, with few of the wide range of bright and stimulating resources available for children to explore.

ENGLISH

61. Standards pupils achieve and the progress they make in English are very good at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Important factors in this achievement are; most teachers and special support assistants work well together to encourage reading and vocabulary work, signs and symbols are used very effectively in all lessons and the speech and language therapist works with teachers and support staff to successfully maximise good communication. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards the subject and they achieve well because, in most cases, the literacy hour is very effective in providing good, well structured teaching and learning opportunities. Pupils with English as a second language make good progress in the acquisition of language skills because they are very well supported by a specialist assistant and also because they are very well taught.
62. During Key Stage 1 pupils learn to communicate very well, pay attention and respond to others. They make choices and express preferences either verbally or by signing. By the time they are seven, most pupils are vocalising and clearly stating preferences, for example by signing what they would prefer to drink. They follow instructions, some with prompting from a member of staff. Higher attaining pupils join in singing rhymes, speaking sentences of up to nine words. They can receive and give out instructions. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils continue to improve their speaking and listening skills very well. Pupils with additional special educational needs make very good progress following the instructions of a teacher in the sensory room. They look for objects that are hidden under a cloth and watch a bubble tube. Role-play and imaginative play are used constantly in most lessons to encourage pupils to talk. This is a very effective element of English lessons often used as a good teaching aid.
63. Pupils make good progress in reading overall. There is a lot of evidence of pupils in the early stages of reading at Key Stage 1. Lower attaining pupils visually follow objects and light beams. They are able to make a choice between objects and recognise photographs of their classmates. By the time they are seven, many pupils turn the pages of a book, a number recognise there is a front and a back to a book and understand when text and pictures are the right way up. They recognise that print carries meaning and a few can identify their own name and friends' names from flash cards. Higher attaining pupils match words when given a choice of six words and recognise the days of the week. Most pupils are able to identify correct symbols for morning and afternoon activities throughout the key stages. During Key Stage 2, pupils continue to improve their early reading skills. They begin to understand that a book is read from left to right and enjoy listening and joining in when the big book is read. For

example, when working with the teacher reading 'Rumble in the Jungle' pupils link sounds, signs and some words successfully. Older pupils turn the pages of 'The Tiger Who Came for Tea' and point out people and activities on the page successfully. By the time they are 11, a few pupils recognise sounds, for example some can rhyme flop with mop, hop and cop. They are also beginning to recognise words that are used often. Many know how to use a book and will look for particular information, some using reference books and contents pages to help in their search. All pupils enjoy stories and poems and have learnt to look after books carefully.

64. Pupils' achievements in writing are good overall. At Key Stage 1 pupils can hold a pencil, some can draw dot-to-dot, draw between curved and simple zigzag lines and colour pictures keeping within the lines. Lower attaining pupils use objects of reference, manipulate materials trace shapes and letters in sand. The higher attaining pupils learn to overwrite and underwrite and understand that the written word conveys meaning. They use information and communications technology to write their own names showing knowledge of the use of capital letters by the time they are seven. One pupil clearly wrote 'TCT' on a piece of paper to represent a ticket during a role-play exercise based on 'The Big Train Ride.' At Key Stage 2 one Year 4 pupil can independently write his own name and address, date his work and copy a sentence describing his drawings. By the time they are 11, most pupils have improved their control of writing materials including pencils, crayons and paint. They learn to use a simple word processing program, which speaks what they write. A few of the Year 6 pupils that left at the end of the summer term could write a sentence with little assistance.
65. Overall the quality of teaching and learning is very good at Key Stage 1 where pupils are enthusiastic, interested and co-operative in lessons. Teaching in this class is often excellent. At Key Stage 2, teaching and learning are mostly good. There is some excellent teaching for pupils aged nine and ten and occasionally unsatisfactory teaching for pupils aged seven and eight. When teaching is unsatisfactory this is due to insufficient liaison and organisation of support staff and overlong activities that do not match pupils' needs. In consequence attention is focused on one pupil at a time which leads to the other pupil in the group becoming bored and misbehaving. Higher attaining pupils are given work that is not sufficiently difficult.
66. Overall, teachers know their subject well and plan and select appropriate materials. For example, furry animal toys are used to illustrate the story of the 'Little Red Hen'. Methods outlined in the National Literacy Strategy are adapted and used most effectively. Teachers are well supported by support assistants who know the needs of the pupils really well. Work is planned carefully to build on what pupils already know and extend them further. All teachers are aware of the need to seize every opportunity to develop language skills. Time is used well in the sensory room to extend understanding of language for pupils with additional special educational needs, for example, developing understanding of questions such as "where is it?" Although the room is very small and will only take two pupils at a time. Other areas of the curriculum make significant contributions to pupils' good achievement in English. They improve their vocabulary, for example, during a science lesson a Year 6 pupil can name parts of a skeleton pointing and saying legs, arms, bones and teeth. In art pupils learn to talk about materials and express their preferences. In a geography lesson a pupil could spell the word 'football' while writing about his holiday abroad.
67. There has been a distinct improvement since the last inspection in 1997. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced and adapted appropriately to meet the needs of the pupils. There is now clear direction in the use of signing and picture vocabulary with the full use of the Derbyshire Language Scheme, Makaton and Boardmaker used throughout the school. There is very regular support from the speech therapist; support is given in class, individually and in small groups. Since the last inspection the school has employed a nursery nurse as an assistant specialising in English as an additional language to help support the thirteen ethnic pupils within the school. This has been very successful and provides an excellent link and support to parents and pupils alike. Teachers plan their work more consistently on a two-year cycle to accommodate the mixed aged groups. There is very good assessment, recording and reporting in English. Assessment profiles are updated half-termly, and progress is recorded within the English National Curriculum Programmes of Study 2000. The school is now

producing evidence of progress in pupils' profiles in graphical details for easy access. A lack of monitoring was criticised at the last inspection this is now fully in place and is working well. Teachers and pupils evaluate at the end of every lesson, and individual education plans are clearly targeted and reviewed regularly.

68. The subject co-ordinator has a key role in monitoring, evaluating and improving performance in English. She acts as an adviser when needed and has encouraged her colleagues in the use of the Literacy Strategy. She has been instrumental in ensuring a more consistent approach to the curriculum and monitoring since the last inspection. Along with other curriculum subjects a Literacy Focus week has taken place over the past twelve months organised by the co-ordinator and this has helped promote the profile of English within the school. The English resources have been built up and are now good. There is a library that for its size is well stocked, however a more appropriate place for library books would be advantageous. There are very good wall displays throughout the school based on the literacy hour. For example, Year 6 choosing 'The Tiger who came to tea' and Year 2 picking 'The Rabbit'. There are plans in the future to form a parents group where parents will come into school to help with reading tasks

MATHEMATICS

69. Pupils achieve well and their progress is very good at both key stages. The National Numeracy Strategy has had a significant impact on standards achieved and the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics. Pupils are achieving targets set on individual education plans. Those with English as a second language are making the same rates of progress as others in their classes. By the time pupils are seven, they join in number rhymes and songs with great pleasure. They learn to clap or tap parts of their body as they count to ten. Lower attaining pupils learn to raise one finger, some still requiring the assistance of adults to do this. Higher attaining pupils can count beyond ten and count down to zero. A few pupils can count in twos and tens with their teacher and correctly count objects even when some are taken away. They are beginning to know the difference between more and less, and can distinguish between short and long objects. They are learning to recognise numerals, shapes and coins. By the time pupils are 11 they are using shapes to make patterns and pictures of trains and tractors. Lower attaining pupils can anticipate the noise the balloon will make when it is popped. They love to take away green bottles as the class sings the song. Higher attaining pupils are learning to sort and order numerals to ten and are beginning to count on from a given number. They recognise and can select the "number of the week". A few are able to say which number comes before and after. They learn to name one, two and five pence coins.
70. Other areas of the curriculum contribute to the development of pupils' mathematical skills. For example at register time pupils count those present and calculate the number requiring lunch. In design and technology lessons they learn to cut sandwiches in half to fit into the sandwich box. During information and communications technology lessons they learn place words such as over, under and behind and in music they learn to beat a drum slowly or quickly.
71. The quality of teaching and learning are very good at Key Stage 1 where the teacher's enthusiasm really inspires and encourages pupils to do their best. Teaching and learning are good at Key Stage 2 where half of the lessons are good, a quarter are very good and the remaining quarter are satisfactory. Overall lessons are very well planned and the teachers have a good understanding of the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. Classroom assistants are also knowledgeable and confidently work with small groups. They are making a significant contribution to the high standards achieved in mathematics. The subject co-ordinator is to be congratulated for the quality of the training she has provided and for working alongside colleagues so that there is a consistent approach to teaching mathematics throughout the school.
72. The most effective teachers organise the class and resources really well. They are skilled managers enabling classroom assistants to work successfully with small groups. They control

the class expertly and can deal effectively with any bad behaviour. The resources chosen are highly appropriate and fascinate the pupils; who really enjoy opening a box to find little lizards to count or elephants that can be linked together. They show delight when puppets are used or when they reach into a 'feely' box to find an object. Teachers are very skilled at changing the apparatus so there is always something fresh and exciting to interest the pupils. As a result learning in mathematics is fun and therefore successful. For example, in one lesson pupils sang a song about Mr Orange, a large orange bird puppet that loves worms for breakfast. They really enjoyed shaking Mr Orange's wing and very confidently counted the remaining worms each time he ate one for his breakfast. In all mathematics lessons singing and rhymes are used most effectively to consolidate pupils' learning. Teachers also make good use of the plenary sessions at the end of lessons when pupils' achievements are shared and celebrated and they are reminded about what they have learnt. Throughout the lessons pupils are praised and encouraged by all the adults and teachers continually check to ensure that everyone is participating fully. It is not surprising that pupils are so eager to take part in maths lessons and that they all learning so effectively. Teachers maintain good records of pupils' progress, set targets in their individual education plans and ensure these are achieved. This contributes well to the high quality of the report writing in this subject.

73. There has been a great improvement in the teaching of mathematics since the last inspection and this can be directly attributed to the way the school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers are now very clear and confident about teaching the subject with the result that the quality of teaching in lessons is much improved. In addition the co-ordinator and senior managers now effectively monitor teaching and learning thereby ensuring that high standards are maintained.

SCIENCE

74. Pupils' achievements and progress in science are good overall and at times, very good, particularly at Key Stage 1. This reflects the high quality of the teaching and the very positive attitudes to work of pupils at this key stage. Although standards are maintained at the same high level as the previous inspection overall, they are improved for pupils at Key Stage 1 in line with the improvement in the teaching. During Key Stage 1, pupils learn to use their senses for example, to explore taste and the texture of a range of materials. Higher attaining pupils successfully sort items through identifying their properties including hard and soft, rough and smooth, hot and cold. They make simple circuits and activate bulbs and buzzers. By the time they are seven, pupils know that plants need water to grow and can identify parts of the body. Higher attaining pupils develop a simple understanding of how the brain is involved in interpreting what we see, hear, touch or taste. They know that electrical items need a source of power and that some items become 'stuck' to magnets. Those with additional special educational needs learn well through joining in with action songs, for example, 'Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes', although some require prompting from staff. They indicate preferences for different tastes and follow light sources as they are moved. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils consolidate their work using their senses. They learn that humans need to eat in order to be active and begin to understand how the body reacts to strenuous activity. One class danced energetically and explored their feelings when they stopped. Another class investigated a range of breakfast cereals and recorded which ones they preferred. By the time they are 11, pupils know how wind-up and battery operated toys operate. They explore animal habitats through pond dipping and examining insects through magnifying glasses. Higher attaining pupils can say why some animals live where they do. Through investigating the effects of different surfaces most understand the effects of pushing and pulling and a few determine which surfaces cause the least friction.
75. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. They are particularly good at Key Stage 1 and range from satisfactory to excellent at Key Stage 2. Pupils learn best when their teachers are enthusiastic and animated, arousing curiosity and interest and making lessons fun. For example, a puppet is used to help pupils identify parts of the body and different textures are introduced with "what else have we got?" Skilful questioning draws out answers at

appropriate levels from all pupils including those with English as a second language. Lessons are very well planned to ensure there are suitable activities for different groups. In a lesson on bones massage of feet and hands emphasised the sense of touch and helped pupils explore those parts of their body. Other pupils printed bone-like marks on outlines of the body. They all touched and moved the skeleton 'Skinny Sam'. Pupils are managed exceptionally well through the excellent relationships they have with the staff. They are confident that the work they are asked to do will not be too difficult and therefore they try hard to succeed. Support staff play an important role, leading groups or working with individual pupils. They are also instrumental in helping pupils behave well. Like the teachers they distract pupils to prevent unsatisfactory behaviour and praise when pupils conform. Usually resources are to hand but on occasions time is wasted while items are collected and this leads to pupils temporarily losing interest. Effective assessment procedures successfully lead to clear, detailed reports on pupils' progress for their parents.

76. The time available for teaching science has increased since the last inspection and is now sufficient to cover the subject in adequate depth and breadth. However, there are instances of the afternoon science sessions being too long for some pupils and interest flagging towards the end. Most staff wisely change activities and often end the lesson early. This shortens the teaching time available for the subject. Science is the current area for improvement and the co-ordinator is freed from the additional responsibility of being a class teacher in order to concentrate on raising standards in the subject. Recently the curriculum has been reviewed in the light of new initiatives, and two terms of the new schemes of work are complete. These and lesson plans are of good quality indicating how the needs of all the pupils will be met. Outlines indicate all areas of the curriculum will be covered appropriately over a two-year cycle. Visits, for example to a farm, an environmental centre and the botanical gardens bring the subject alive for pupils. Use of the sensory room in school and the facilities at Harris House widen the experiences effectively of pupils with additional special educational needs. Although the sensory room in school has some good equipment, the space is very small. A very successful science focus week used contacts made from the business partnership to provide a wealth of activities. For example, the 'Electric Man' who worked well with pupils investigating electricity.

ART

77. During the week of the inspection it was only possible to see one art lesson at Key Stage 1 and another at Key Stage 2. Judgements are therefore also based on discussions with staff and pupils and a scrutiny of pupils' work. Indications are that pupils are achieving well and making good progress at Key Stage 2 and very good progress at Key Stage 1 where the quality of teaching is exceptionally good. At both key stages pupils are learning to master a good variety of techniques and to work with a wide range of tools and materials. For example, by the time they are seven pupils are learning to weave and are gaining knowledge about how people throughout the world use different materials such as wool and willow canes to make all kinds of artefacts such as clothing and baskets. By the time they are 11, pupils are looking at the work of famous artists and painting self-portraits. They are able to mix colours on a palette and control tools with more care.
78. Teaching and learning are good at Key Stage 2 and very good at Key Stage 1. Teachers plan lessons very effectively and the scheme of work gradually develops pupils' ability to use new techniques and introduces them to the work of artists. Teachers seem knowledgeable and enjoy the subject. They take great care in selecting resources that will fascinate and inspire pupils. For example in one lesson the teacher supplied a wonderful collection of plant material for the pupils to use to make a collage picture. The flowers and leaves included many colours and shades, textures and scents and the pupils were encouraged to talk about, touch and smell the foliage before they made their picture. This was a most enriching experience for all pupils and the results of their work were most decorative. In another lesson pupils examined a very wide range of woven materials and expressed delight at the lovely colours and softness of some of the samples. The teacher, through her very skilful questioning, encouraged the pupils to express their preferences and talk about the differences they could see. Opportunities for

developing language skills in this lesson were outstanding. Pupils went on to weave ribbon, wool, raffia, plastic and many other fabrics around the branches of a tree and were so proud of their achievement. In very good lessons teachers are able to manage pupils very effectively so that behaviour is very good and pupils concentrate for an amazing length of time. In these lessons classrooms assistants work most effectively with small groups helping them to be successful. In other lessons the bad behaviour of a few pupils disrupts the learning of others. Teachers are keeping good records of pupils' progress and examples of their work are kept in a Record of Achievement. However some reports to parents do not give sufficient detail about what pupils know, understand and can do.

79. The good learning that goes on in art lessons is clearly demonstrated when pupils talk about and remember what they have done in the past. They have enjoyed working with artists in residence greatly and produced some truly amazing work such as the mural and musical instruments in the school playground and the clay tiles that decorate the walls of the corridor. The co-ordinator has worked hard to improve the curriculum and the skills and confidence of her colleagues through arranging focus weeks when the artists have come into the school to work with the pupils. She is effectively monitoring teaching and learning in art and has amassed a good range of resources. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when progress in art was only satisfactory and the subject was without a co-ordinator.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

80. Few lessons were observed of design and technology during the inspection and they were all at Key Stage 2. Judgements, therefore, are based on these lessons and the evidence available of pupils' work and teachers' planning. Indications are that standards are appropriate at both key stages and that pupils are making good progress. By the time they are seven they are learning to make objects with construction toys and make and decorate Easter biscuits. They learn to use tools such as scissors, rolling pins and cutters. By the time they are 11 higher attaining pupils are developing an awareness of healthy foods and design snacks and meals such as vegetarian spaghetti. They enjoy disassembling objects and want to put them back together again.
81. Teaching and learning in design and technology are good at both key stages. Pupils seem to really enjoy the making process, especially when food is involved. Teachers plan lessons in detail and the scheme of work is well considered. During lessons teachers are most effective at gaining pupils' attention and creating an air of anticipation. For example during a lesson on clockwork, pupils gasped with excitement as the teacher showed and talked about the wind-up toys. They were so silent as they listened to a musical box that it would have been possible to hear a pin drop. During another lesson, pupils enjoyed discovering what was in the shopping bag for their picnic and were eager to make sandwiches to fit into the sandwich box. There are high expectations that pupils will behave well and any bad behaviour is managed effectively. Teachers use signing and symbols really well so that all pupils can contribute to the lessons. The support of classroom assistants is very good and enables small groups of pupils to make choices and participate fully. There are good records of pupils' progress and photographs are used effectively.
82. The co-ordinator has arranged focus weeks to raise the profile of the subject and has enlisted the support of the local education authority's adviser to develop colleagues' knowledge and confidence. As a result there has been a clear improvement in the quality of teaching of design and technology since the last inspection. The subject is now well co-ordinated and there is sufficient time allocated although it is not taught throughout the year. The co-ordinator monitors teaching and learning in design and technology as a means of improving standards.

GEOGRAPHY

83. Geography is taught on a half-termly cycle and alternates with history. No teaching was observed at Key Stage 1 but evidence from lessons seen at Key Stage 2, planning, displays, and annual review reports, show that pupils' progress in geography is good overall.
84. By the time pupils are seven, most can find their way around the school, and recognise people who help them for example, policemen and nurses. They are increasingly aware of the local environment and can recognise a variety of weather conditions. Higher attaining pupils can also follow simple directions. Pupils with additional special needs show awareness of the world around and are able to explore using visual and physical senses such as through touching trees and animals. This is because of the high quality of stimulating experiences that are planned. By the time they reach age 11, pupils have continued to make good progress. In Year 3 for example, pupils learn more about the world around them. Following a visit to a local park to look at an island they then explore the features of an island in the classroom. Pupils with additional special educational needs, with the help of support assistants, investigate an 'island' made in the water tray. The sensory experience supports their learning and understanding. Higher attaining pupils construct models of bridges and explore ways to travel to an island. The good use of resources supports learning well. Well planned teaching and the very good use of a video of a weather forecast successfully helps pupils in Years 4 and 5 to improve their understanding of the effects that the weather has on their lives. Higher attaining pupils, recognise weather symbols, can locate places and areas on the map of the United Kingdom and write simple reports about activities that occur in different weather conditions. Pupils with additional special needs, through the very good use of additional resources such as hot and cold food and clothes of different types, were able to explore using most of their senses to gain an understanding of hot and cold conditions.
85. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall and at times very good. Lessons are well planned and activities well matched to the varying needs and abilities of the pupils. Teachers are enthusiastic and have good subject knowledge, which gains pupils' interest. Pupils increase their knowledge and understanding because they are alert and keen to learn throughout the lessons. A variety of activities including sensory experiences, for example, feeling the shape of the island and putting on different clothes works well in helping pupils make progress. In addition, the very good additional support by the classroom assistants who are well briefed by the class teacher contributes significantly to the success of teaching and learning.
86. The co-ordinator has successfully maintained the good provision that was observed at the time of the last inspection. The planning for environmental education continues to be strength of the school and this area has further benefited from considerable improvement to the school grounds, which include a small environmental area and pond. Overall subject planning is improved. Weaknesses highlighted in the last report in respect of the continuity and progression of learning have been addressed. An overall two-year plan ensures that pupils build on their learning even if they stay in a class for an additional year.

HISTORY

87. It is not possible to report on the progress of pupils in Key Stage 1, due to the limitations of the available records, which report on experiences, rather than what pupils know, understand and can do. In addition, the half-termly cycle of teaching meant there were no history lessons taught at this key stage during the inspection. Assessments in history are satisfactory, but are in their early stages, of use. They have been improved in order to track pupils' progress more succinctly. Records show that pupils have had the opportunity to explore simple chronology using photographs of themselves as they have grown and changed. They have experienced playing with old-fashioned toys during the history focus week.

88. During Key Stage 2, there are indications that pupils make satisfactory progress, and by age 11 higher attaining pupils are beginning to understand that life in the past was different, and to recognise the changes that are made over time. They show interest in the experiences offered to them and benefit from a range of visits and visitors. They explore artefacts and taste food that would have been eaten in Viking times. Pupils with additional special needs and those with English as an additional language show their enjoyment of these experiences. Pupils study the invasion of the Romans to Britain, and while they clearly enjoy dressing up in Roman togas, this concept of invasion was difficult for the majority of pupils to appreciate.
89. There is insufficient evidence on which to base a judgement on teaching and learning. It was only possible to observe one lesson of history. In this lesson, pupils were well supported by classroom assistants ensuring they all had opportunities to learn. A range of stimulating and exciting experiences encouraged pupils to participate. For example, pupils clearly enjoy dressing up and role-play activities. However, the lesson plans scrutinised were overly ambitious and too much was attempted in one lesson, which lasted an hour and a half. This was too long for many pupils to sustain their concentration. Planning shows that three of the four classes have history lessons lasting for this length of time.
90. Since the last inspection the provision for teaching history has improved and is now satisfactory. The time available has increased but the way in which the timetable is organised leads to overlong lessons. Resources, whilst improved, require further development. Many successful visits into the local community, and a history focus week, have enhanced the experiences of pupils in many aspects of history very effectively.
91. The co-ordinator has successfully developed and improved the provision for history. The recent introduction of a new scheme of work, together with revised planning in line with the new National Curriculum orders supports non-specialist teachers to provide interesting historical experiences for all pupils. The co-ordinator has benefited from some additional training and recognises that all staff would benefit from focused training in order to further improve and develop teaching.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

92. Since the last inspection a great deal of work has focused very successfully on improving standards in information and communications technology. At year three of a four-year improvement plan, pupils' achievements and progress have substantially increased from satisfactory to very good at both key stages. Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils learn to operate switches and to notice what is happening on the monitor. Higher attaining pupils begin to use a mouse. They click on items and move them. For example in one program, they select and move items of clothing on to a teddy bear. By the time they are seven, pupils with additional special educational needs make patterns using a simple program. Most will indicate that they wish the computer to be switched on and know that the keyboard and the mouse make things happen. Many pupils will ask for favourite programs. They learn to colour in using a flood technique and enjoy listening to stories some appropriately turning pages on the screen. Higher attaining pupils improve their mouse control, and increase the keys and commands they are able to use, although some need prompting, to create a range of effects. During Key Stage 2, pupils develop their control of switches changing pictures and causing animation on the screen. Many learn to move objects with accuracy, for example, locating weather symbols on a map and identify which programs icons refer to. They learn to operate the digital camera and are delighted when the image appears on the monitor. Pupils begin to type words, for example, their names, on the screen and explore the different effects of font and size. By the time they are 11, pupils have an understanding of cause and effect. They produce repeating patterns and most are clear that their printing will be on a printer on the network on the other side of the room. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to write using a talking word processing program and have used a range of effects including changing size, for example, to enlarge their work.

93. Information and communications technology is used effectively to support pupils' learning in a range of subjects both, when pupils are withdrawn to work either individually or in small groups in the computer room and during some lessons. As the inspection was early in the term, there were some opportunities missed to enhance learning in lessons. For example, a graph was built up to show preferences in a science lesson using pieces of card. Computers are used very effectively to support numeracy. Pupils match numbers and count in twos. They learn to follow instructions and develop and consolidate language skills placing items in places where instructed. This is particularly effective for those with English as an additional language. One class sent e-mails to a teacher who was ill, practising their English and keeping in touch.
94. The quality of the teaching and the learning are very good. The very effective co-ordinator established what staff could do and planned in-service training to raise skill levels. Although the training is not yet complete, staff are more confident and skilled in using the new technology than at the last inspection. Some parents have also attended training sessions and improved their skills also. The co-ordinator works with one or two pupils at a time in the computer room. Lessons are very well planned to ensure the work is suitably difficult. Pupils enjoy working on the computers because the choice of programs is very good and suited to skill level and understanding. Teaching methods are varied and the fun instilled is very effective. One pupil, learning to move items on the screen was taking a long time and in danger of losing concentration. The teacher gave the pupil the task of dressing and undressing a teddy bear on the screen. Then a race was established where the teacher would try and undress the teddy she had before the on-screen Teddy was undressed. Needless to say, the pupil won and was delighted. Pupils' achievements are recorded and used as a basis for their next lesson to ensure they continue to make progress. Overall, the recording of pupils' progress is very good which leads to well written annual reports for parents.
95. The new scheme of work is very effective and additional funding has been used extremely well to help pupils improve. Pupils and staff use the digital camera very well and photographs provide very good evidence of pupils' successes.

MUSIC

96. Pupils' achievements and progress in music are very good at both key stages. Music is used to support and enhance all areas of the curriculum, and is strength of the school. By the time pupils' reach age seven they have made very good progress. Higher attaining pupils can recognise long and short sounds can evaluate their performance and follow simple conducting instructions and stop playing on command. They are able to use a variety of techniques to play and recognise sounds of different duration and in the lesson observed many pupils were attaining standards expected for pupils of that age. Pupils with additional special needs were able to enjoy exploring sounds and most could make long and short sounds using a play microphone, bang tambourines and enjoy the experience. During Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make very good progress and are able to join in ensemble work, play simple percussion instruments and enjoy performing in front of an audience. Pupils in Year 4 can use instruments to recognise and play a beat and respond to the pulse in the music. Pupils with additional special needs are animated by a variety of sounds and can take part in performances with support.
97. Teaching and learning are always good and sometimes excellent. Teaching is well planned, to build on prior learning. Music games develop pupils' interest and make learning fun which pupils of all abilities can enjoy and benefit. Detailed planning ensures that higher attaining pupils are challenged and stimulated while pupils with additional special needs are fully included in the musical experiences. In a few instances, although pupils enjoy a range of musical experiences, work for higher attaining pupils is not difficult enough for some of the lesson.
98. Pupils enjoy and benefit from a wide range of musical experiences. Resources are very good and have recently been improved by the addition of a range of outdoors musical instruments

made from recycled materials. Visits and visitors such as the SAMPAD South Asian Music Project group have enabled all pupils to experience a range of multi-cultural music, and listen to a wide variety of music in many situations. The additional provision of music therapy supports the emotional needs of three pupils very well and is a positive asset to the school and its pupils.

99. The subject co-ordinator, a part-time teacher, is hardworking and is responsible along with the previous co-ordinator for the success of the provision and the significant improvement since the last inspection. She has revised and improved the assessment of pupils' ability that now gives a clear picture of pupils' progress over time. The new scheme of work is a clear and detailed working document, which fully supports non-specialist teachers.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

100. Pupils' achievements and progress in physical education are good. Pupils experience a wide range of activities as required by the National Curriculum 2000. At both key stages they undertake co-ordination skills, which successfully improves their spatial awareness. Many of the pupils show skill in controlling a ball. A higher attaining pupil dribbled a football for a sustained period much to the amazement and amusement of his friends. Most pupils can aim and bounce a ball. All pupils can make a circuit of the hall without touching each other. There is a great deal of co-operation and enjoyment evident during the physical education sessions with all classes, they practise working in twos and when ready in small groups. Pupils know that they do warm up exercises at the beginning and cool down activities at the end of the lesson. They participate fully and this works well as a means of class control. Some pupils with specific special educational needs attend a donkey riding session once a week. This successfully improves their co-ordination and muscle control and also gives them confidence and self-esteem. They enjoy receiving certificates that show the progress they have made.
101. All pupils attend swimming sessions unless they are unwell. They have individual programmes and targets to follow and this is well monitored by staff. Most pupils wear armbands and show confidence in the water, joining in games and enjoying playing with inflatable balls and water toys. The higher attaining pupils are able to move by kicking their feet or by flapping their arms and hands. Lower attaining pupils enjoy being in the small pool with their individual support assistants. They learn to move around in the water. Pupils gain certificates as they improve their skills.
102. Teaching and learning are very good at Key Stage 1. They are good overall at Key Stage 2 although there are instances of very good teaching and learning and unsatisfactory teaching and learning at this key stage. Staff use praise and encouragement constantly which prompts pupils to try harder. Lessons are planned well using a two-year cycle of topics to ensure pupils make progress even if they stay in one class for two years. Gymnastics, games and dance are all covered and pupils' progress is continually assessed and recorded. Evaluations of lessons both by the teacher and the pupils are used effectively to help with future planning. In the best lessons, teachers are very aware of the short concentration spans of some pupils and change activities at suitable intervals to maintain interest. They ask pupils to demonstrate their skills to the rest of the class, which works really well in reinforcing learning. Conversely where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory pupils are not asked to demonstrate and verbal instructions are unclear. As a result, pupils do not know what they are expected to do and some misbehave.
103. Since the last inspection links with a local primary school have led to some pupils at Key Stage 2 joining in a physical education lesson at the mainstream school. The link had not started this term but video evidence indicates the high level of success achieved. Pupils improve their confidence, and understand the real need to co-operate in team games. There are clearly positive elements for both the Cherry Oak pupils and those from the primary school.

104. Overall there has been considerable improvement since the last inspection, notably; the co-ordinator is now monitoring her subject. The range of off-site facilities used on a regular basis has increased and includes a bowling alley, adventure playgrounds, swimming baths and donkey riding. Resources in the school are good. As part of a focus week this summer, which broadened the activities available and improved pupils' skills considerably, they attended Calthorpe School and received certificates for taking part in sporting events. Other events during that week included African Caribbean dancing, large apparatus work and an inflatable assault course. The pupils also benefit all year round from the excellent resource of the school's adventure playground.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

105. Although it was only possible to see one lesson in religious education evidence in the form of photographs, pupils' work, teachers' and subject planning and evaluations indicate that pupils' achievement and progress in religious education is satisfactory at both key stages. Pupils are often seen to take part in role-playing. Younger pupils re-enact the Nativity using their own adopted donkey in the local Church. There are photographs of Key Stage 1 pupils dressed in white Hindu costume depicting that 'everyone is equal.' The paintings and drawings by Key Stage 1 pupils display the symbols of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. They are learning about 'people who help us' at both key stages this term and one Year 2 pupil in his evaluation said "God looks at us," another says "We help with chairs". One Year 2 pupil helped a lower attaining pupil to sign without being asked. The pupils learn how we keep special occasions e.g. baptism and marriage and this links with Christian and multi-faith festivals such as Christmas, Divali and Ramadan. The emphasis is for pupils to be active and to experience feelings and understanding.
106. Planning for the curriculum is based appropriately on the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus. Pupils have the opportunity to visit places of worship such as local churches, mosques and synagogues. On a wall display Key Stage 2 pupils are seen visiting the local Church of St Lawrence and attempting bell-ringing and producing brass rubbings. The curriculum is taught on a two-year cycle to accommodate the mixed ability groupings and offers the pupils a wide variety of learning experiences. In the one lesson inspected the teaching and learning were satisfactory. Year 6 pupils wearing different hats were role-playing nurses, policemen and firemen and recognising how some people in the community help us.
107. Since the last inspection there has been a distinct improvement. The subject is well co-ordinated by the headteacher and there are now very adequate resources encompassing the five major world faiths. Assessment is generally good but some teachers describe the experiences of pupils rather than what they have learnt or can do. Evaluation takes place at the end of each lesson by staff and pupils. During the last academic year, there was a religious education focus week when pupils celebrated the Chinese New Year.