

INSPECTION REPORT

RAKEGATE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Oxley, Wolverhampton

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104304

Headteacher: Mr. S. Harris

Reporting inspector: Mr. T. Neat
20007

Dates of inspection: 13th – 16th November 2000

Inspection number: 224041

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sandwell Road Oxley Wolverhampton West Midlands
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Christine Irvine
Date of previous inspection:	11th February 1997

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John Bayliss 19664	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Michael Best 10403	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	11
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	15
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	16
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	23

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Rakegate Junior School is bigger than most primary schools, having 286 pupils compared with the average size nationally of 226. There are about as many boys as girls. It serves an urban community to the north of Wolverhampton. The school receives pupils from a mixed area of council, privately owned and rented properties. In recent years there has been an increase in the proportion of homes that are rented from private landlords. Local authority data shows that the socio-economic circumstances of people living in the ward from which most pupils are drawn have worsened in the last few years. A significant number of pupils are withdrawn from the school to join schools in a neighbouring authority. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is high. The percentage identified as having special educational needs, including statements, is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need is broadly in line with the national average. High proportions of the pupils join or leave the school at various times during the year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Rakegate Junior School is an improving school, which is led effectively by the headteacher. He receives good support from the deputy headteacher and governors. The teaching is good and the pupils make steady progress. The test results for the years before 2000 show that in comparison with similar schools¹ Rakegate children frequently attain good standards. It is an effective and caring school, which gives good support to its pupils. Rakegate gives satisfactory value for the money invested in it.

What the school does well

- Lessons are taught well.
- There is a good framework to guide teachers when they plan their lessons.
- This is a caring and supportive school. There are good procedures, which help pupils to get on well and feel happy at school.
- Pupils who speak English as a second language also get on well and they are made to feel welcome.
- The school looks after pupils with special educational needs well, and they make good progress.

What could be improved

- Standards in reading are not high enough.
- Pupils are not taught all that they should be about information and communication technology.
- Teachers do not always plan effectively to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils.
- The way in which the school analyses information about its performance is not effective enough.

As well as including those areas above in its action plan, the governors should also seek ways of ensuring that the classroom support assistants are used more effectively.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since it was last inspected in February 1997, the school has made satisfactory progress. It has addressed the key issues of the last report effectively. Good progress has been made with some of the matters raised, including the ways in which the school tries to get all pupils to attend regularly. The procedures for promoting good attendance are now judged to be excellent. The standards attained by pupils in the national tests have improved at the same rate as in other schools up and down the country, although reading requires attention. Problems outside the school's control have meant that standards in information and communication technology have not improved as much as they should. The quality of teaching has improved significantly to reach the good levels seen during the inspection.

¹ Schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A
 above average B
 Average C
 Below average D
 well below average E

The table above shows that, in 2000, the standards attained by pupils were well below the national average for all schools in the country in English, mathematics and science. They were below the national average for similar schools in English and science, and well below in mathematics. The reason for this decline in standards from the previous year is because there were significantly more lower attaining pupils who joined the school in that particular year group, and there were also more pupils with special educational needs. However, the schools' results for the three years before that were better. In 1999, for example, English and mathematics standards were below the national average for all schools and science standards were broadly in line with the average, but when compared with similar schools, English and science results were above average and mathematics results were average. The school sets appropriate targets for raising standards and makes satisfactory progress towards achieving them.

Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained, except in information and communications technology, where they are still not high enough, due to technical difficulties, which impede access to the Internet. Inspection evidence shows that standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects, pupils attain in line with the national expectations for their age. In design and technology and religious education standards have risen. Pupils now attain standards in design and technology that are above national expectations. Standards in religious education are now in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are well motivated and have good attitudes to their work, which positively promote learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Pupils work and play together well.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are very good. Pupils respect the values and beliefs of others, and have a good awareness of how their actions affect others.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Last year's attendance was unsatisfactory. However, recent levels of attendance have improved and are now close to the national average, thanks to the work of the Home School Link Officer and the Educational Social Worker, and the school's excellent initiatives.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	N/A	N/A	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. Ten per cent of the lessons seen were very good, 57 per cent were good, 30 per cent were satisfactory and three per cent were unsatisfactory. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory or poor in about 25 per cent of lessons. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. All the very good lessons seen were in English and mathematics. The quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics, design and technology, music and religious education. It is satisfactory in all the other subjects. In information and communication technology no direct teaching was seen. In physical education, although the school makes proper provision for teaching this subject, it was not possible to see enough lessons to make a reliable judgement. The teaching meets the needs of most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. However, teachers do not always plan effectively for higher attaining, gifted and talented pupils. Most teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach, have high expectations of their pupils and maintain a brisk pace in lessons. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as a second language, learn well. Pupils show good levels of interest in their work. They try hard, concentrate well and work independently when required.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum makes a positive contribution to the standards that pupils attain. A good framework is in place which guides teachers well when they plan. The provision of personal, health and social education is good. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. There are very constructive links with neighbouring schools. Pupils do not have full access to the National Curriculum for information and communication technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress. Some of the targets in pupils' individual education plans do not pick out well enough the small steps that are needed to help them to make better progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. There is racial harmony in the school. These pupils feel welcome and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. The provision for spiritual development has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The school works well in raising pupils' awareness of their own heritage and the diversity of cultures in British society. Provision for social and moral development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school places a high priority on the well-being of its pupils. The procedures to ensure this are good. The steps taken to promote good attendance are excellent. There are good arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress.

The school's partnership with parents is good. Parents value the work of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher provides clear direction and is supported well by the governors and the deputy headteacher. The work of the senior management team has a clear impact on the effective running of the school. The roles of the subject co-ordinators are well developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governing body plays an effective part in shaping the development of the school. It has devised good systems for gathering information to help it make decisions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are good. A good start has been made on analysing the attainment and progress of pupils. However, the use of this data is not yet fully effective in supporting the school's efforts to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Funds are targeted effectively on priorities for helping pupils to learn. The school's application of the principles of best value in its work is satisfactory.

There are sufficient teaching and support staff and learning resources to allow the National Curriculum to be taught effectively. The accommodation is satisfactory overall.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children make good progress at school. • Behaviour is good. • The amount of homework. • Teaching is good. • They feel comfortable in approaching staff with problems and concerns. • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is well led and managed. • The school develops their children into mature and responsible individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better information about the progress made by their children. • An improvement in the range of activities outside lessons.

18 per cent of parents completed and returned a questionnaire seeking their opinions of the school, and 7 parents attended a meeting with the registered inspector, called for the same purpose. Most parents who responded to the pre-inspection consultation, are supportive of the school. Inspection evidence endorses the majority of parents' positive views. No evidence was found to support the negative views expressed by a very small number of parents. There is no reason why parents should not feel well informed about progress if they avail themselves of the opportunities provided by the school. The range of extra-curricular activities is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The results of the national tests in 2000 indicate that the pupils last year attained standards in English, mathematics and science that were well below the national average for all schools. In English and science, the results were below average for schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, and in mathematics they were well below average. The school was disappointed with these results, but not surprised, since there were more pupils than usual who had joined or left the school as the time to take the tests had drawn nearer. Many of these were lower attaining pupils. There were also more pupils with special educational needs. In the three years before results had improved at a rate that was in line with that found in most schools across the country, despite the above average number of pupils with special educational needs and the high proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language. In 1999, the standards attained by pupils in the national tests were above the average for similar schools in English and science, and broadly average in mathematics. The school sets appropriate targets for raising standards and makes satisfactory progress towards achieving them.
2. Overall, the inspectors found that the standards attained are satisfactory. The good quality of teaching reduces the effects of much movement of pupils in and out of the school. There is clear evidence to show that a good proportion of those who leave before the national tests are taken are higher attaining pupils. This has a negative effect on the school's performance in the tests. Inspection evidence shows that in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, pupils' standards are broadly average. In other subjects, pupils attain standards that are in line with the national expectations for their age, except in design and technology where they are above. In religious education, standards are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus.
3. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained, except in information and communications technology, where they are unsatisfactory, due largely to technical problems which hinder access to the Internet. Standards have risen in design and technology thanks to improved learning resources. In religious education, standards are also better, because the quality of teaching has improved.
4. Pupils make satisfactory progress in nearly all subjects, other than design and technology, where pupils get on better than expected. In information and communications technology they do not improve their skills at the rate they should. Pupils with special educational needs, and those whose first language is not English, make good progress. Not all those who join the school benefit from the good start given to those who transfer from the neighbouring infant school, and large numbers move into and out of the school throughout the key stage, but most pupils achieve appropriately.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

5. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good overall. They have improved since the time of the previous inspection when attitudes to learning were satisfactory and there were problems with behaviour, particularly at lunchtimes and in the afternoon. Relationships, that were good at that time, have also improved and are now very good. The school achieves its aim that 'all children should experience an environment that engenders positive attitudes and respect towards one another and the world in which we live'.
6. The pupils have good attitudes to learning and are well motivated. In lessons they listen politely and attentively to the teacher and to each other. The pupils are polite, friendly and well behaved, they are confident and relate easily to adults. They apply themselves well in the classroom and they sustain their concentration. The pupils respond appropriately to instructions from teachers and settle quickly to work. They work well together and alone, and

show an interest in their work. Most are keen to participate in question and answer sessions and do so in a sensible and mature way. They readily take turns and show a willingness to apply themselves to whatever task is presented to them. They are keen to collect rewards for good behaviour and good work. The attitudes that are displayed by the overwhelming majority of pupils positively promote learning.

7. Despite the presence of some potentially challenging pupils, identified as having emotional and behavioural special needs, inspection evidence supports the views of parents that behaviour overall is good. Very little inappropriate behaviour was observed during the inspection. This is a significant improvement since the time of the previous inspection. Teachers have good strategies for classroom management. They are sensitive to the needs of pupils as individuals. The overall standard of pupils' behaviour outside the classroom, in the playground, when moving to the hall for assembly and when eating their lunch is never less than satisfactory, and is frequently good or very good. Pupils behave well during break times and they work and play together well. There were five fixed term exclusions in the past year. All of which were of two pupils with behaviour problems. These exclusions in no way reflect the high standards of behaviour that now exist within the school. There is an ethos of good behaviour within the school that facilitates learning.
8. There is satisfactory provision for the pupils' personal development. Relationships are very good, both among pupils and between pupils and adults. Pupils have opportunities to assume responsibility, which steadily increase through their school life. They are diligent in fulfilling their classroom and school responsibilities. Pupils respect the values and beliefs of others, and this is apparent in the way they relate to each other, both in lessons and elsewhere. Pupils of all ages mix well together at playtimes and lunchtimes. Racial harmony exists within the school. Pupils from different ethnic and social backgrounds work and play together well. When given suitable opportunities, pupils show that they can collaborate well; for example, when working in groups, in team games or in the playground.
9. Last year's level of attendance was unsatisfactory, being below the national average for primary schools. Although this reflected improvement since the time of the previous inspection, when improving poor attendance levels was a key issue for the school, the rate of improvement continued to be a concern for the school. The appointment of a Home School Link Officer to work closely with the school and its Educational Social Worker has resulted in considerable further improvement. Recent levels of attendance have been satisfactory and the level of unauthorised absence has been reduced to a level below the national average. This is very good improvement since the time of the previous inspection. There is no evidence of truancy. Punctuality in the morning is generally good. When instances of lateness occur they are of a minor nature and are not disruptive to lessons. Timekeeping throughout the day is good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

10. The quality of teaching is good. Ten per cent of the lessons observed were very good, 57 per cent were good, 30 per cent were satisfactory and three per cent were unsatisfactory. This is a clear improvement since the last inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory or poor in about 25 per cent of lessons. About 20 per cent of the teaching seen during the inspection was done by supply teachers. The quality of their work was good. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is good. This enables pupils to build up their basic skills, which they use to good effect in all the subjects they study. All the very good lessons were in English and mathematics. They were observed in Years 4 and 5. The quality of teaching is good in English, mathematics, design and technology, music and religious education. Much good quality teaching in mathematics is serving to motivate pupils and make them keen to improve; there are, however, some improvements still needed in the use of the feedback (plenary) sessions to help consolidate and extend pupils' learning during lessons. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects. In physical education, although the school makes proper provision for teaching, it was not possible to see enough lessons to make a reliable judgement.

11. The good teaching ensures that pupils gain skills, knowledge and understanding effectively. The teachers' good knowledge of most of the subjects they teach enhances pupils' interest in learning. This was a strong feature of a mathematics lesson for pupils in Year 5 about co-ordinates, in which the teacher's very good understanding of the subject matter, together with her obvious enthusiasm, resulted in the class enjoying the lesson and learning very well. Generally, the teachers have good expectations of what the pupils can achieve. In a physical education session for Year 4 pupils, the teacher urged the class to do better. The pupils responded well – most were keen to succeed – and as a result they made good progress. In the majority of lessons, pupils concentrate hard and behave well, responding appropriately to the good control exerted by the teachers.
12. Overall, the teachers plan their lessons well. They set out clearly what they want the pupils to learn, and they make sure at the start of the lesson that the class understand this. The lesson plans usually indicate how the teachers will judge whether pupils have learned what they intended. This further enhances the progress that is made. The needs of most pupils are met in the plans that the teachers draw up. However, not enough attention is paid in some subjects to making effective provision for the higher attaining pupils, and those who are gifted and talented. These pupils too often are required to finish the tasks set for the majority before they can tackle more difficult activities.
13. The best teaching is done at a good pace. A particularly effective example of this was seen in a lesson for Year 4 about bar charts. The mental arithmetic part of this session was crisply delivered, challenging and cheerful in tone. The pupils were excited by this and made good progress. Teachers work well with classroom support assistants, but sometimes the tasks they are asked to undertake are not closely enough defined and this detracts from their effectiveness. Classroom assistants make an effective contribution to the progress of pupils with special educational needs who are in larger groups. Their contribution has yet to be developed in order to support pupils on appropriate tasks in subjects other than literacy.
14. Most of the teachers are beginning to use computers appropriately as part of the work in different subjects, and they set homework tasks effectively to reinforce what is done in class. The quality of teaching for the pupils with special educational needs, who are withdrawn from their classes for intensive work to develop their literacy skills, is good. It makes a significant contribution to the progress pupils make in their learning. However, teachers do not consistently show in their planning the small steps in learning that are needed to ensure that literacy and numeracy skills are developed effectively in as many subjects as possible. Pupils whose first language is not English are taught effectively, although lesson plans do not always identify how the language needs of these pupils will be addressed in different subjects such as science.
15. Only two of the lessons seen were unsatisfactory; they were in mathematics and geography. In these lessons, one or more of the following factors were present:
 - learning was not consolidated effectively at the end of lessons,
 - the majority of pupils did not learn effectively because only the more able pupils' contributions were valued,
 - the tasks set did not meet the needs of all the pupils, and
 - the pace of work was too slow.
16. Most pupils learn well. The teachers use of effective methods helps in this. In a science lesson for Year 6 pupils, the teacher set pupils a brief 'warm-up' task, which led into the main learning focus of the lesson. This helped the class to understand the new subject matter well. Generally, pupils apply themselves effectively to the work in hand. They co-operate well and do not rely too much on the teacher; for the most part, they are able to work independently. Pupils with special educational needs learn well, thanks to the good provision made for them. Those for whom English is an additional language feel comfortable with their peers, and this helps them to learn well too.

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

17. The school is providing a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum for its pupils. All the subjects of the National Curriculum are provided for, and statutory requirements are met, other than in information and communication technology.
18. The school has effective strategies for teaching basic skills in literacy and numeracy. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented satisfactorily. It is making an important contribution to raising standards in this area of the curriculum. This is despite the absence of a literacy co-ordinator, due to the secondment and then resignation of the previous postholder, which has slowed the development of the school's teaching of literacy. However, a number of the less fluent readers do not get sufficient support and this holds them back.
19. The National Numeracy Strategy has also been implemented effectively. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Shortcomings reported at the time of the last inspection in religious education and personal and social education have been successfully addressed.
20. The curriculum for information and communication technology is in the process of being implemented fully, following the appointment of a new subject co-ordinator and the purchase of new equipment. Pupils' skills in this subject, notably word processing and data handling, are starting to be used effectively across the curriculum. However, much of this work is only just in place and overall standards have yet to reach those expected for pupils of the same age groups. In addition, technical difficulties, (which lie outside the control of the school), currently prevent pupils from completing the prescribed programme of study by the age of 11 years.
21. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education through subjects such as science, religious education and physical education. Visiting speakers also work with pupils to complement the work of the school in sex education and in raising pupils' awareness of the dangers of drug misuse.
22. The quality of curriculum planning has improved since the last inspection. The school has appropriate policies to guide its work. It is in the process of completing new schemes of work for all subjects, based on nationally available published guidance, to reflect the revised National Curriculum. A good quality framework is now in place to guide teachers when they plan.
23. Clear procedures have been developed for long, medium and short-term planning. Good arrangements are in place for monitoring the effectiveness of teachers' planning through the scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment activities and discussions with pupils. Checks are also made to ensure that there is continuity in learning and that the pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are developed progressively. Subject co-ordinators play an important role in helping teachers to plan, but due to staff changes not every subject has a co-ordinator at the present time.
24. The curriculum provides opportunities for all to learn. Issues relating to the way in which different pupils' needs are met by grouping them for teaching purposes, identified in the last inspection report, have been addressed. Although the provision for higher attaining pupils is better, in that they are provided with extension activities, few teachers plan consistently to meet the needs of these pupils through challenging activities set at the start of lessons. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that more able pupils often have to complete work that is relatively easy before starting on the extension activities. This has a negative effect on the standards they achieve.
25. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They have access to an appropriate range of learning activities. There is a reliable structure in place to identify and review pupils who have special educational needs, which fully meets the requirement of the

National Code of Practice². However, some of the targets in pupils' individual education plans are too broad; they do not focus sufficiently on identifying the small steps needed for these pupils to develop skills of reading and writing in different subjects. There is effective provision made for the pupils for whom English is an additional language. Targeted support is provided for these pupils in all year groups to enhance their learning.

26. The school's good provision for extra-curricular activities has been maintained. There is a programme of activities that extends pupils' interests, contributes to their social development and provides support for learning outside the school day. These include netball, football and badminton, a magazine club and a chess club. A homework club, run by a member of staff from the neighbouring secondary school, takes place each week.
27. Satisfactory links with the community enrich the curriculum and contribute to pupils' learning. The school has good working relationships with other neighbouring schools. The local area is well used to support pupils' studies and older pupils have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit to Llangollen. The school benefits from a teacher education partnership with a local university.
28. Provision for pupils' spiritual development, including the quality of collective worship, has significantly improved since the time of the previous report and is now satisfactory. Whole school assemblies are based on themes that reflect Christian traditions, but incorporate aspects from other faiths. Pupils respond positively, and on occasions they become absorbed in the opportunities for reflection that they are offered. Hymns are sung enthusiastically and pupils take part in prayers respectfully. The provision for social and moral development is satisfactory. The school applies a consistent behaviour policy and uses rewards effectively. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. Members of staff encourage the pupils to respect each other, and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Subjects in the curriculum promote an understanding of other cultures and ways of life. Pupils have an awareness of their own heritage and how people used to live. They can compare economic factors and ways of life between rich and poor nations. The observation of the traditions and festivals of different faiths throughout the year makes an effective contribution to their cultural development. Visitors to the school demonstrate their traditions and ways of life, helping to increase pupils' understanding of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29. Rakegate Junior School is a caring and supportive school that places a high priority on the well-being of the pupils in its care. The school's provision for the welfare, health and safety of its pupils is good. It enhances the quality of education that is provided by the school. The generally positive situation found at the time of the previous inspection has been improved. There is a consistent and sensitive implementation of school policies across the school that was missing previously. All members of the school community work together to provide an environment in which the pupils feel well cared for and secure. All members of staff have very good knowledge of the pupils as individuals, and this enables them to respond sensitively to individual need. The pupils are happy at school and confidently turn to adults when they need help or advice. The caring support provided by the school was well demonstrated in a lesson for Year 3 pupils in which they identified teachers as 'special people'.
30. Members of the mid-day supervisory staff relate well to the pupils. They provide appropriate support during lunchtimes, which has a positive effect on behaviour and safety. The first-aid and fire safety arrangements are satisfactory overall, and the school provides a safe and supportive environment in classrooms and public areas that facilitates learning. The school's procedures for dealing with accidents are secure.
31. The procedures for child protection are good. They meet statutory requirements. The designated member is well supported by the headteacher, and he is suitably experienced to properly undertake his supportive role. Class teachers and support staff are attentive and conscientious in their approach to the proper support of the pupils in their charge.

² Guidance on the assessment of pupils with special educational needs.

32. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are excellent. Were they less effective the attendance level would be much lower than it is because a number of parents have a relaxed attitude about sending their children to school. Records of attendance are properly maintained and comply with statutory requirements. Procedures for recording unauthorised absence are rigorous, and there are good procedures to deal effectively with any unexpected absence. There is very good liaison with the school's Education Social Worker, who works very closely with the recently appointed Home School Link Officer. Their efforts, supported by many positive initiatives within the school, such as the competitive Attendance League amongst individual classes, have a very positive impact on recent attendance levels.
33. The measures that are in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. Rewards and sanctions are fair, and are well understood and accepted by pupils. The procedures allow the pupils to take advantage of the opportunities for learning presented to them in an environment free from oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism or racism.
34. The school's formal arrangements for the monitoring and support of pupils' personal development are satisfactory overall. There are effective procedures in place to support personal development, but there is little formal recording of pupils' non-academic development other than for behaviour. There are brief references to personal development in the pupils' annual reports but they are inconsistent between teachers and do not form a comprehensive record of non-academic achievement. Informal arrangements for supporting pupils' personal development, which benefit from teachers' knowledge of pupils as individuals, are good. The provision of regular 'achievement assemblies' allows the pupils an opportunity to share their success in all aspects of school life with their friends and families.
35. The school takes good care of pupils with special educational needs; they are supported well. The same is true of pupils for whom English is a second language. For example, the part-time teacher responsible for assisting these pupils takes samples of pupils' work and keeps an assessment 'diary', with detailed notes on their progress.
36. The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. Constant monitoring and assessment throughout the school support academic progress well. The teachers check on pupils' achievements through observations, questioning and tests. Teachers regularly identify how they will check that pupils have learned effectively and they use this information well to inform their planning. Standardised reading tests are used regularly to indicate pupils' attainment against age-related expectations. Teachers use this information effectively to identify pupils with special educational needs and to set targets for individuals. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully towards these targets. In addition to the school's own assessments in English and mathematics, both national and non-statutory tests are carefully analysed in order to track pupils' progress and set whole-school targets for development. This shows good improvement since the previous inspection. The school has successfully addressed the key issue raised in the last inspection report, of ensuring that information provided by assessment is used in curriculum planning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. Parents find many things to like about the school, which they think is a good one. They are very satisfied with the quality and effectiveness of what the school provides and achieves. Nearly all who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire agreed that they would feel comfortable approaching the school if they had worries or concerns. Their children like school. They consider the school to be led well, with good teaching. Inspection evidence supports many of these views especially those about the care and support provided by the school and the standards of behaviour. A small number of parents expressed concern about the information they receive about the progress made by their children and the provision of an interesting range of activities outside lessons. No evidence was found during the inspection to support these views. There is good provision of information about progress and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities.

38. The school has good links with parents. These have improved since they were found to be satisfactory at the time of the previous inspection. Home school links have been supported effectively by the introduction of a home-school agreement that provides for commitment by the school, parents and the pupils to the improvement of standards. Parents and other helpers are warmly welcomed into school and are encouraged to participate in its work. Personal circumstances mean that many parents feel unable to support the work of the school directly, either in the classroom or at home, but those that do so are committed to the school. Their support, which is highly valued by the school, makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. The involvement of parents, and pupils, in social and fund raising activities is good. The 'Friends' of the school organisation provides much-appreciated funds to support the work of the school.
39. The quality of information provided formally by the school, though variable, is good overall. Newsletters and information evenings keep parents well-informed about school activities. The school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents provide parents with all the relevant information. They meet statutory requirements. However, the recent reporting of attendance in the prospectus is misleading in respect of reporting unauthorised absence, since the headings for these two categories are the wrong way round. Parents are provided with opportunities to be informed about their child's progress and development on a termly basis at open evenings, and through an annual written report. The quality of the latter varies from teacher to teacher, but overall they are satisfactory. Reports meet statutory requirements and they provide an effective summary of pupils' attainment and progress. They are individual, reflecting much thought by teachers, but although they give some targets for improvement they do not provide parents with sufficient information on how their child's standard of work compares with that expected for their age, except at the end of each key stage.
40. Parents of pupils with special needs are suitably informed of their children's progress. The teacher responsible for assisting pupils for whom English is a second language attends the meetings between parents and teachers to provide a clear picture of progress and support.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The effective leadership and management of the headteacher and key members of staff have a positive effect on the standards that pupils attain. The headteacher provides clear direction and is supported well by the governors and the deputy headteacher. The role of the senior management team is well developed, and the efforts of its members have a clear impact on the work of the school. Since the last inspection, in spite of a large unavoidable turnover of staff, the headteacher has worked successfully with the teachers to develop the role of the subject co-ordinator. The work of those with responsibility for subjects now has a beneficial effect on standards, mainly through an effective programme of checking the quality of teaching and learning. Some of the recent lesson observations made in this programme are of high quality. The action taken by the headteacher and staff, to monitor and evaluate this aspect of its performance has resulted in the improvements to the quality of teaching that are evident since the last inspection. In most respects the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and has the capacity to make further improvements.
42. The school has made a good start in its analysis of information about pupils' attainment and progress. For example, the science co-ordinator has looked closely at the results that pupils have attained over the last few years in the national tests for that subject, and has used the information about strengths and weaknesses in the answers given, to adapt planning for science in order to raise standards. Also, the attainment and progress of ethnic minority groups are analysed closely to ensure that they make satisfactory progress compared with other pupils. The work of the headteacher and key members of staff has been successful in maintaining a rate of improvement in standards that is at least as good as the national trend, despite large movements of pupils into and out of the school. However, the analysis of information about standards does not yet allow the school to measure its overall performance as effectively as it might. For example, the data does not easily show the progress made by those pupils who do not move into and out of the school.

43. The governing body plays an effective role in shaping the development of the school. It has good systems for gathering information to help it make decisions. It takes its role in monitoring and evaluating the school's effectiveness seriously, and began a number of years ago to find out how the school was performing, by, for example, observing lessons. Also, each governor takes responsibility for a subject and liaises with the co-ordinator. These arrangements help the governing body to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school's work more fully. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively. Pupils do not yet have full access to the National Curriculum for information and communication technology, but this is due to reasons largely beyond the governors' control.
44. Overall, the school has appropriate aims that are reflected well in its life and work, and are regularly reviewed. There is a harmonious atmosphere and pupils have good attitudes to work.
45. The performance of teachers is managed effectively. Regular interviews are held between the headteacher and individual members of staff at which targets are set and reviewed. This has a positive effect on the quality of the school's work.
46. There is an appropriate number of teaching staff to teach the National Curriculum and there are sufficient support staff and adults to meet the day-to-day needs of the pupils. Good arrangements for the induction of new members of staff ensure that little time is lost in helping them to settle in. The school makes good use of teachers' expertise and specialist knowledge to support and develop learning. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school library is about to be re-opened after refurbishment.
47. Learning resources, particularly reading books, were judged to be poor in the previous inspection. The school has acted upon this and resources are now sufficient, overall, to allow the curriculum to be taught effectively. However, in physical education, resources still are inadequate. Also, there are insufficient books in 'book boxes' to motivate and encourage independent reading.
48. The school has sound procedures for ensuring that the financial resources available to it, which are at a similar level to those in schools nationally, are used appropriately to support pupils' learning. Financial reserves are maintained at a suitable level and the school has effective contingency plans in place to ensure that it will be able to respond to changing circumstances with minimal disruption to its planned strategies for the further raising of standards. The specific funds elements of the school's finances, such as those for pupils with special educational needs, are well targeted. There is satisfactory identification of priorities for improving the quality of education and raising standards. The involvement of governors and the procedures for budget setting, monitoring and general administration are appropriate overall. There has been increased involvement from members of the governing body to the corporate decision making process since the time of the previous inspection.
49. The most recent auditor's report, dated March 1999, concluded that 'overall, the financial management systems and records continue to be satisfactorily maintained'. A number of procedural problems were identified which have been addressed effectively by the school.
50. Governors are aware of the need to obtain value for money and have good procedures for ensuring that best value is obtained when purchasing products or services. They have an understanding of the principles of best value and are beginning to make use of their findings to guide the future development of the school. They realise the need to challenge what is being done in the school, to assess the impact on learning and, guided by the headteacher, they are making some effective comparisons with how school standards compare with those expected or those of other similar schools nationally. As a result they have an increasingly clear understanding of the educational strengths and weaknesses of the school.
51. The school makes satisfactory use of new technologies. In addition to the support of administration activities, where computerised systems are well used, the school is moving forward to embrace the benefits of information and communication technology across all aspects of school life. The school secretary has a very good appreciation of her role and

responsibilities, which she performs conscientiously and well, providing positive support to the school community.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. In order to make the school more effective, the governors and staff should:

1. Raise standards in reading by:
 - (a) evaluating and improving the provision for reading outside the literacy hour so that:
 - (i) pupils who are reading 'just below average' are helped to make better progress;
 - (ii) there are more opportunities for readers who need to gain greater fluency;
 - (b) improving the range, quality and quantity of reading resources in 'book boxes' so that they meet the pupils' needs and interests;
[Please see paragraphs 47, 56, 60 and 61]
2. Raise standards in information and communication technology by ensuring that:
 - (a) all staff complete the planned training;
 - (b) there are sufficient computers for all year groups;
 - (c) a full range of programmes is available;
 - (d) the technical difficulties with the Internet and the email provider are remedied promptly;
 - (e) when (a) to (d) are achieved, provide planned, regular opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology across the curriculum;
[Please see paragraphs 101 and 103]
3. Improve the planned provision for higher attaining, gifted and talented pupils by ensuring that they are not required to work unnecessarily through the tasks set for other pupils, but, wherever possible, are given appropriately challenging work of their own;
[Please see paragraphs 12 and 72]
4. Use information about pupils' attainment and progress more effectively to measure the school's performance.
[Please see paragraph 42]

In addition, the governors and staff should seek ways of ensuring that classroom support assistants are used more effectively, by defining their tasks more clearly in the lessons in which they take part.

[Please see paragraph 13]

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	64
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10	57	30	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	286
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	72

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	84

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	33

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	45
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	51

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	33	33	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	17	26
	Girls	25	22	27
	Total	43	39	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (71)	59 (64)	80 (85)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	20	28
	Girls	26	24	27
	Total	46	44	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (75)	67 (65)	83 (84)
	National	66 (68)	65 (69)	74 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	20
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	15
Indian	33
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	218
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.2
Average class size	27.9

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	45

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	4	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	489187
Total expenditure	493376
Expenditure per pupil	1667
Balance brought forward from previous year	40511
Balance carried forward to next year	36322

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	279
Number of questionnaires returned	49

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	43	2	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	54	37	0	0	9
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	57	2	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	54	4	4	0
The teaching is good.	52	41	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	35	15	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	28	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	28	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	50	4	0	7
The school is well led and managed.	54	41	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	43	2	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	43	15	0	13

NB: not all rows add to 100 per cent due to rounding.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

53. Standards in English are below average in the national tests for eleven-year-olds. These results are affected by the large number of pupils entering and leaving the school, and the higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs. Not all the pupils joining the school have had the good start provided by the neighbouring infant school. A significant number of pupils moving from other schools have learning and behavioural difficulties. However, once settled in school, progress in speaking and listening and writing is good. This is because the school has focused on improving standards, particularly in writing, and pupils are benefiting from an extra allocation of time for the subject as well as improved planning. Inspection evidence indicates that boys and girls do equally well. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are gaining greater confidence and competence in English, and they make good progress. Pupils with special needs are well supported, which enables them to make good progress with their learning.
54. The findings of the current inspection show that by the age of eleven, pupils achieve standards that are broadly in line with those reached nationally. This is because English has improved since the last inspection and standards are beginning to rise, particularly in writing. Teachers in the middle and upper year groups have clearer expectations of the amount and quality of writing, and they plan more challenging, personal and imaginative work. Learning is improving because of this. Pupils confidently use words and ideas explored in class lessons in their own work. An example was seen when pupils in Year 6 wrote from a different point of view and held the reader's interest with humorous and descriptive accounts of a hamster's escape. Better use is now made of computers for drafting and editing writing, but reading provision and reading resources still provide a mixed picture. The school is not yet evaluating sufficiently the support that is given to ensure that all pupils make the best progress possible in reading.
55. Speaking and listening skills are broadly average. In general, pupils listen carefully to each other and, when given the opportunity, they collaborate well in small groups. Despite opportunities for discussion in lessons, many pupils are shy when talking with adults. Teachers work hard, and they use good questioning skills to help the less confident speakers put forward their point of view. This is evident when older pupils study autobiographies and they are encouraged to step into the author's shoes and explain why certain objects are treasured most. The final parts of lessons, in extended writing time and in the literacy hour, are used well to develop speaking and listening skills. Pupils make good progress over time with their learning, and they gain in confidence as they present their work and share their findings with others.
56. By eleven, standards in reading are close to average. Reading undertaken in the literacy hour offers good challenges, and the pupils are learning to read with a deeper understanding. For instance, older, more capable readers study magazine articles and use the structure of the sentences to help them find the meaning of unknown words, such as 'sabotage', 'treason' and 'apartheid'. They begin to refer to the text to justify their own opinion. Younger pupils develop greater accuracy with their reading as they recall words by sight, and begin to make good guesses and 'spell out' more complex letter and sound blends. However, opportunities are less productive in other kinds of reading. The choice, quality and quantity of books on offer in 'book boxes' needs improving if resources are to support learning appropriately. In general, pupils say there are not enough books for some reading levels, and one or two comment on books being too easy or boring. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported with their reading. However, the school is less clear on how to provide specific help for pupils who are achieving at level 'just below average', or those who need to gain greater fluency with their reading.
57. By the end of the junior school, standards in writing are close to the levels achieved by most eleven-year-olds nationally. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes, not only in English lessons, but in other subjects, such as history. They make good progress with shaping their ideas into stories, and draw from characters in books to enliven their own writing in 'extended

writing time'. Older pupils in Year 6, make good progress. They work at a brisk pace and produce longer pieces of personal writing. There is greater opportunity to use computers to draft on screen since the last inspection, but in general still more time is needed to try out and improve what they write. Although work is neatly presented, few pupils enter school with a cursive style in handwriting. This means that In Year 3 and Year 4 pupils are still developing the handwriting skills that many pupils of a similar age have already attained. In each year group basic skills are taught regularly, and by Year 6, spelling and punctuation are used more consistently and correctly in sentences.

58. Pupils work hard during lessons and are keen to learn. A small minority of boys with behaviour difficulties can, on occasions, demand too much of the teacher's time. Older pupils respond well to sharing their written work and they enjoy listening to the work of writers in other classes.
59. Teaching is good in English. Lessons in literacy are managed well and overall the learning needs of different groups are met. This includes more capable readers and writers, who are challenged by the books and tasks set in lessons. For instance, older pupils study the features of non-fiction books and discuss the difference between headings and subtitles as they skim and scan for information about subjects such as floods. Work is marked consistently and feedback in lessons enables pupils to have a clear picture of their own progress. However, when the pupils read from 'book boxes', there are few assessments of these reading activities which give a clear picture of the skills individual pupils need to develop their own reading. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils. Because the pupils see their contributions are valued they are willing to join in. Pupils and teachers work hard together and lessons are well paced.
60. A new literacy coordinator is to join the school in January. Clear guidelines for the subject are in place and teachers have enough expertise in teaching the literacy hour to develop pupils' skills in English effectively. Much has been done to raise standards in writing. A clearer focus on how reading is taught and learned, other than in the literacy hour, has yet to be brought to bear on raising standards in that area.
61. Resources for reading vary. The literacy hour is appropriately resourced to meet the pupils' learning needs. However other reading resources, as identified in the previous report, are still poor in places. The school library is about to be opened and this will provide greater access to a wider range of books and reading material.

MATHEMATICS

62. Findings from the inspection show that most pupils in Year 6 attain standards in numeracy, and in number, space, shape and measures and data handling, that are broadly in line with those expected of eleven-year-olds. However, there is a significant minority of pupils who learn at a slower rate; they are generally working within their capabilities, but attaining standards that are below average.
63. The school's National Curriculum test results for 11-year-olds in 2000 show a broadly similar picture. Compared with similar schools, these results are below average. The school's results for 1999 were the best for many years and, overall, standards are improving in line with the national trend. However, the number of pupils exceeding the standards expected of pupils of this age has remained below average. The school has recognised the problem and has taken the decision to change the way in which pupils are taught mathematics in Years 5 and 6. Here, the less able pupils are taught in a separate group and the remaining pupils are split into two parallel groups. Teachers' expectations of the more able pupils are rising and, through the implementation of the numeracy strategy, pupils are being given more challenging work. For example, a number of pupils in Year 6 demonstrate their grasp of the higher level work by calculating a perimeter by using a formula and explaining their working to others. National Curriculum test results indicate that, over time, girls attain slightly higher standards than boys at the age of 11; this is similar to the national picture. Inspection evidence supports this.

64. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make sound progress. Where specific help is provided for them, they make good progress. The amount of support time available in mathematics lessons is inadequate to support pupils who learn at a slower rate and, in some classes, the support available is not utilised to the full. As a result, these pupils do not always make the best progress possible.
65. Pupils in Year 6 enjoy number problems. They handle numbers with growing confidence and are keen to answer. Most pupils in the school have positive attitudes to mathematics and enjoy their success. Many older pupils demonstrate speed and accuracy when, for example, multiplying by ten and one hundred. They are able to formulate a straightforward mathematical calculation involving money or measures and can correctly identify which mathematical operation it is appropriate to use to obtain a correct answer. More able pupils can give reasons for their approaches to solving a problem. However, some pupils are not able to give clear oral explanations for their thinking and there are times when teachers miss the opportunity to explain and develop thinking.
66. Recent work in science in Year 6 has involved the use of data handling, including the use of computer-based packages to gather and present data. Pupils enjoy this work and are able to offer accurate interpretations of their findings. At present, the use of information and communication technology to extend pupils' mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding is limited. One contributory factor to this is the lack of access to appropriate packages. Another is the expertise of staff who have yet to receive appropriate training in the development of pupils' higher order skills.
67. When working with shapes the majority of pupils are able to identify the properties of two-and three-dimensional shapes and many can suggest ways in which the area can be estimated and accurately measured. Pupils are able to use a range of measures but many find difficulty in readily transferring their skills from one measure to another.
68. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Almost 60 per cent of teaching is good or very good. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen. The National Numeracy Strategy has helped teachers to challenge pupils much more rigorously.
69. Oral and mental arithmetic sessions at the beginning of each lesson are generally conducted at a good pace. Pupils are attentive and keen to answer. They listen very carefully and try hard to explain the thinking behind their answer. The use of number fans is particularly helpful in encouraging all pupils to 'have a go'. In a good Year 4 lesson, the use of a 'half price sale' provided a real-life challenge for pupils that enable pupils of all abilities to shine. Occasionally, teachers do not engage sufficiently in discussion of pupils' thinking or, alternatively, they get too involved in hearing one pupil's ideas. In the unsatisfactory lesson observed, the majority of pupils did not learn effectively because only the more able pupils' contributions were valued.
70. In their whole class work teachers use mathematical vocabulary well, and the majority provide clear and straightforward instructions to enable pupils to successfully complete the tasks they are set. In one Year 5 class the pupils take the responsibility for their own learning by suggesting ways forward, whilst in another, the teacher's good use of searching questions enabled pupils to extend their thinking and achieve what they initially thought was impossible. These factors contribute well to the quality of pupils' learning.
71. The use of the feedback (plenary) session is varied. In the majority of lessons seen the objectives set at the beginning of the lesson are revisited. In good lessons in Years 4 and 5, questioning is judiciously used to test pupils' understanding, consolidate what they have learnt in the lesson and then extend their knowledge by taking them one step further in preparation for the next lesson. In some lessons, this last step is not taken and has a dampening effect on learning.
72. Although teachers do plan to challenge the more able pupils in their classes, much of this takes the form of extension activities that are completed in addition to, rather than instead of, the work done by other pupils. Some teachers are not sufficiently confident about extending

pupils' work more effectively. Indeed, in some books there is evidence of pupils completing lengthy exercises when they are clearly capable of greater challenges from the outset.

73. Pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics. However, scrutiny of last year's work shows that progress is not even. The standards evident in the present Year 4 show that a considerable improvement has been made this term. There is clear evidence in previous work of underachievement, and this is confirmed by the school. Pupils' progress is being tracked from year to year and as a result, the school is increasingly aware of what needs to be done in order to raise the standards.
74. More use could be made of learning resources, especially with Year 3 pupils, to help them grasp mathematical concepts. Better progress in work on equivalent fractions is impeded by a lack of practical equipment.
75. Satisfactory improvement has been made since the last inspection. Standards are rising and changes in the way in which mathematics is taught are having a positive impact. However, much is only recently in place and the co-ordinator is well aware of the need to maintain the impetus of improvement.

SCIENCE

76. The results of the 2000 national tests showed that the standards attained by the pupils in Year 6 last year were well below the national average for all schools and below the average for similar schools. However, in the three years before that results were better. In 1999, science standards were above the average for similar schools. Overall, the school's standards in science are improving steadily. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are broadly average, that boys and girls do equally well and that pupils make satisfactory progress. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has improved. The quality of lessons is now more consistent, and this helps to counteract the effects of large numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school on the overall results.
77. In investigational work in Year 6 the pupils are set good challenges, which make them think. For example they were asked to apply their knowledge of forces to experimenting with paper 'spinners'. The skilful questioning of the teacher provoked the pupils to work out what they would change to alter the speed at which the 'spinners' fell. The pupils were motivated well by this, and they co-operated effectively with their partners to solve the problem. Observation of this lesson, discussion with the pupils and the scrutiny of the past work of older pupils, showed that they fully understand how to set up and carry out their investigations. Most pupils have a wider knowledge of matters concerning plants and animals, but this is due to the greater time that some teachers spend in covering this area. This imbalance does not help pupils to raise their standards across the whole subject.
78. Pupils have good attitudes to science, which help their learning a great deal. Much of their completed work is presented very well; it is clearly set out and neatly written. Their past work shows that most pupils make satisfactory progress as they pass through the school, and they achieve effectively. So too, do those pupils with special educational needs. The progress of these pupils was criticised in the last report and improvements have been made to the support they are given. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make progress similar to that made by the majority of pupils. Since the last inspection, teachers have improved the provision they make for higher attaining pupils, although too little attention is paid to planning for gifted and talented pupils.
79. In most lessons the pupils' ability to concentrate well and work hard helps their learning. They respond well to the good management of teachers by behaving sensibly. This also helps them to make progress. Other strengths in the teaching also contribute:
 - teachers plan well and regularly identify how they will check that pupils have learned what they intended. This is a clear improvement since the last inspection;
 - teachers plan together to ensure that all pupils have the same opportunities to learn;
 - most teachers expect a good deal of their pupils in terms of their learning and behaviour; and lessons are often taught at a good pace.

80. Some teachers test pupils at the end of a series of lessons and note the results, but there is not yet a systematic way in which everyone records the progress that pupils make as the academic year passes. This makes it difficult to ensure that plans are changed if necessary to challenge different groups of pupils within each class. The learning resources are barely adequate. The teachers use what they have appropriately, but the range of equipment is quite narrow, and the quality of some items is unsatisfactory. The work of the co-ordinator is good, especially his monitoring of the quality of lessons and analysis of pupils' attainment. This is contributing well to raising standards.

ART AND DESIGN

81. Since the last inspection there have been satisfactory improvements and the eleven-year-olds make satisfactory progress and reach the expected standard. The main improvement since the previous inspection has been in a wider study of the work of artists. The acting co-ordinator has a secure grasp of what has to be done so that this subject can continue to improve.
82. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have a sound understanding of the subject, and they teach the pupils the skills they need to become competent and creative artists. Lessons are carefully planned, with clear objectives and appropriate attention is paid to what the pupils are to learn. Good links are made with other subjects, especially history. There are some good examples of paintings based on the style of the Belgian artist Rene Magritte. Pupils are especially adept at designing patterns in the style of William Morris. They are also good at mixing colours and use this skill effectively in their paintings to improve their quality.
83. All pupils have the opportunity to work in two or three dimensional ways, and the pupils in Year 6 use a range of media to record their work on the Egyptians. They express their ideas using paint and pencil and they produce an interesting range of masks and paintings. Art makes an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Pupils enjoy art and talk about their work with enthusiasm. They are keen to use their skills on school trips and visits, and explain how interesting it was to sketch Oak House, a Tudor home.
84. The acting co-ordinator has maintained staff interest in this area and expected a good standard of display. He monitors their work effectively and has supported teachers in their classrooms so that standards, teaching and learning can improve.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85. Pupils make good progress in design and technology at Key Stage 2 and by the time they leave the school, the quality of the work is above national expectations. All elements of the subject are appropriately promoted. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their work and clearly enjoy its practical nature. Since the last inspection, there have been good improvements in the range of tools supplied for the needs of the older pupils, and good use is made of a wider range of materials. The co-ordinator has a very good grasp of what has to be done so that this subject can continue to improve.
86. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers know the subject well, and they teach their pupils the skills they need to design and make a good range of models and games. Teachers are clear about how the pupils can improve their skills so that, for example, their vehicles can move effectively and they can design and make magnetic games. Lessons are carefully planned, setting out what the pupils are expected to achieve. Good links are made with other subjects, especially geography, science and history. Pupils have created their own designs on the computer, such as vehicles and package designs. There are good examples of games linked to work on the Egyptians. Pupils are challenged to evaluate models, which incorporate a 'cam' mechanism, before designing a moving toy to suit a child. Pupils are especially good at completing good quality working drawings, with measurements and labels, before marking their models. The quality and standard of their work is improved by their ability to design and refine their models.

87. All of the pupils are given good opportunities to select the best materials to use for a specific purpose. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to investigate real products and mechanisms such as torches, which helps them to understand how different components work. They enjoy this subject and talk about their achievements with pride. Pupils plan, sketch and design with concentration, and try hard when making models that move. They have a clear idea of how to improve their work and are keen to explain what they are doing.
88. The co-ordinator provides a very good direction for this subject and continues to develop it effectively. Strong links have been made with the secondary school and valuable opportunities are provided to use their facilities.

GEOGRAPHY

89. There was little teaching of geography observed during the period of the inspection. The previous report found standards were in line with national expectations. Evidence gained during the current inspection from pupils' completed work, discussions with pupils and staff, teachers' planning and displayed work, shows that standards are in line with national expectations.
90. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The lessons seen during the inspection varied from good to unsatisfactory. However, the evidence from pupils' past work and teachers' planning indicates that teaching is satisfactory. In successful lessons the tasks are clearly targeted, so that all pupils make progress. They can assimilate what they have been taught, develop their skills and apply their learning to the task they have been given. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, tasks are not matched well to the learning needs of the pupils.
91. Pupils in Year 3 begin to develop mapping skills. They recognise important features in the local area and represent them on a plan. They progress by planning a route to school on a simple map. By the time pupils are in Year 5, they recognise the United Kingdom on a map and locate major cities, towns, rivers and mountain ranges. They are able to recognise local features from photographs, and relate them to a local large-scale ordnance map. They can identify where the school, church and other local features are located. The teachers' skilful use of appropriate questions enables pupils to respond using geographical terms and to discover the difference between large and small-scale maps. They learn how to use appropriate map symbols.
92. Pupils make a limited study of the differences in farming in Britain and Jamaica; they visit a local farm and learn about land use and types of crops in both countries. They attempt to compare economic factors and ways of life in India with the United Kingdom, but because of limited resources pupils are not able to make comparisons and understand significant differences in order to benefit from the study. Pupils were not able to recall many key features and were confused about what they had learnt.
93. In Year 6 pupils are taught to analyse geographical data. They have the opportunity to stay in Llangollen. The visit is planned in some detail in order that pupils can understand why the area is different, and make a geographical comparison with Wolverhampton.

HISTORY

94. By eleven, standards in history are satisfactory and progress is steady. Younger pupils in Year 4 begin to find out more about life in the past as they study the Tudors in greater depth. They combine different pieces of historical evidence and test out their own conclusions, as they look closely at the fine details of drawings of the Marie Rose. Comparisons are made between present day life and life onboard a Tudor galley.
95. History has improved since the previous inspection. At that time, the lack of a clear planning structure was holding back progress. Now that a new policy and guidelines are in place, older and more capable pupils have the opportunity to progress to higher levels with their learning. Pupils in Years 4 and 6 were studying history during the week of the inspection.

96. In Year 6 pupils make good progress as they develop their knowledge and understanding of the Ancient Egyptians. They are confident when following lines of enquiry and begin to ask deeper questions, such as the reasons for mummification and belief in the afterlife. Pupils communicate their findings successfully by writing a personal account of the discovery of the Pharaoh's tomb
97. Pupils are interested in history and are motivated by the way teachers bring learning to life. For instance, they use taped stories to 'set the scene ' for happenings in the past, and act as archaeologists in role-play about the Tudors. In discussions with pupils, it is evident that they enjoy studying British history and are developing a sound knowledge of different periods in time. For instance, they explain how the Romans brought changes to Britain and know about the effect of railways and industry on life in Victorian times. Older pupils show initiative and a significant number take their interest in history further, by, for example, tracking the development of modern technology from the 1960s onwards.
98. Teaching in history is of satisfactory quality. Teachers have a good grasp of the subject and use skilful questioning to encourage investigation. Whilst resources are effectively used, the range and quantity is less than expected for the study of different periods of time.
99. The subject is soundly managed with good quality guidelines helping teachers to plan clearly for their lessons.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

100. Although standards in information and communication technology are below average, pupils are making appropriate progress in their learning of basic skills such as word-processing and basic data handling. Whilst pupils' attainment and progress in using other elements of information and communication technology are satisfactory overall, much of this knowledge and understanding comes from activities at home.
101. The school's provision for information and communication technology was a key issue for improvement at the time of the previous inspection, with pupils attaining levels below that expected for their age. Their progress in learning was less than satisfactory. The school has taken action to raise standards by appointing a new co-ordinator, improving learning resources and making arrangements for staff training, but there is a long way to go. Much of the provision has only relatively recently been put into place and whilst pupils are making progress, this is not sufficient to keep abreast of the latest National Curriculum requirements. The school is, at present, unable to offer pupils full access to the prescribed programmes of study due to technical problems outside its control. The school reports that, whilst its link with the Internet has been installed for over a year, successful access has only been achieved on a handful of occasions. This is clearly unsatisfactory.
102. Basic word-processing skills are being used effectively by Year 6 pupils for the simple drafting and editing of text. Not all pupils are familiar with the 'search and replace' or 'cut and paste' facilities to assist them in their work and not all are aware of the 'spell-check' option. They are, however, familiar with the keyboard and mouse, and can follow instructions readily. This was demonstrated in a mathematics lesson where two pupils were completing an 'Excel' document to record their calculations of perimeters. Simply data handling programmes are used effectively in science to process and display results.
103. No teaching was seen during the inspection. Teachers are trying hard to identify in their planning, opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology but they are frustrated at many levels. Firstly, their own skills are limited. A training programme has been arranged for next term, and many staff are undertaking preliminary work in preparation for this. Secondly, much of the school's equipment has only recently been acquired. Computer bases have been successfully established in the year group corridors, enabling pupils to have ready access during lessons. However, the number of computers available is limited. Thirdly, technical difficulties impede the regular and effective use of the Internet and email facilities, reducing significantly the potential opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and meet the standards expected nationally.

104. The co-ordinator has had responsibility for this area of the curriculum for just over a year. She remains enthusiastic about her vision for the development of the subject despite the many problems encountered. The school has adopted a nationally available scheme of work that is well matched to the requirements of the National Curriculum, and a start has been made on developing assessment procedures.

MUSIC

105. By the age of eleven pupils reach the expected standard. Since the last inspection there have been satisfactory improvements in provision, because of the effective implementation of the music policy, and the use made by class teachers of the scheme of work.
106. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers know the subject well, and they teach their pupils the skills they need to become creative and competent musicians. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Lessons are well planned with closely identified learning activities. Teachers make good links with history and English, and literacy skills are developed well. For example pupils in Year 4 gave a competent performance of loud and quiet sounds as the poem *Wind Song* is recited. Listening appraisal is linked to history work about the Mary Rose, and pupils enjoy talking about the mood of the music in the song *Gallant Ship*. They are good at putting dynamics into their singing, rhythm and composition work.
107. Pupils enjoy music. They sing well and they play their percussion instruments with care and concentration. Their attitudes and behaviour are good, and they show initiative and responsibility in organising themselves and handling the instruments. Those pupils who receive instrumental tuition from peripatetic brass and string teachers make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs achieve successfully because of the good support they receive.
108. The co-ordinator provides clear educational direction for the subject. She has encouraged the development of curricular links between music and science and history. Valuable contributions have been made to pupils' learning by visiting groups, including Viking, Tudor and string groups. Music makes an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the opportunities it provides for creativity and when pupils work in harmony, and make a personal response to music of widely different styles.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

109. The school makes proper provision for physical education, but it was only possible to see one lesson during the inspection. As a result it is not possible to make reliable judgements about standards, and the quality of teaching and learning.
110. In the only lesson seen, pupils attained standards in games activities that are in line with national expectations. A combination of clear instructions and effective demonstration ensured that the pupils understood and were able to practise netball passing techniques with appropriate skill. The teacher encouraged the class to evaluate their own performance and that of others, in order to improve. The good guidance she gave about what made an effective pass considerably helped pupils' learning. The pupils contributed well to the success of the lesson through their eagerness to join in, and their ability to work together well. They made good progress because the demands made on them by the teacher were good. They had not only to practise the skills of passing, but also to use them in a game with a few of their friends. The teaching also helped them to consolidate their suitably developed tactical understanding of how to mark and avoid marking.
111. All pupils receive appropriate swimming instruction at a local municipal pool. No records of the proportion of pupils who meet the National Curriculum standard, of swimming unaided for 25 metres, were available at the school during the inspection. Pupils have suitable opportunities to take part in extra-curricular sports activities, and to compete with other local schools in traditional team games.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

112. The standards achieved in religious education are in line with those expected at the end of Key Stage 2 and now meet the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Wolverhampton. Since the last inspection the school has made significant improvement in teaching religious education. Judgements about religious education are based on lessons, pupils' work and discussions with both pupils and teachers.
113. Pupils look forward to their lessons in religious education. They learn about different faiths in some detail. As a result they are able to make comparisons between Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam. By the end of the key stage, pupils understand the main principles of each faith, and know about the differences in worship. They understand the celebration of the major festivals and ceremonies that are important to each of the religions.
114. Pupils in Year 6 are able to recall what they learned in Year 3 about the founding of Sikhism, who were the important people and the five basic principles of the faith. In a lesson seen during the inspection, they met with pupils from Years 8 and 12 at the local high school, who explained to them about Sikh traditions. The older pupils explained the significance of colour, dress, the jewels and the scarf, which is important in Sikh ceremonies. They let pupils handle the dresses, provided photographs and samples of sweets that would be used at a Sikh wedding. The teachers' good use of questions enabled pupils to recognise the importance of the holy book and how family influences play an important part in the ceremony.
115. Pupils in earlier years are able to recall simple Bible stories; they recognise the significance of major festivals and what is important to Christians. They hear and learn about stories from different faiths and the influence that they had, and continue to have, on people. Pupils visit the local church and use the building, vestments and furniture as a resource to extend their knowledge. The school's links with the neighbouring infant and high schools, and with churches in the community, provide pupils with opportunities to handle different objects and materials, which the school does not have.
116. The quality of teaching in religious education lessons is satisfactory; often it is good. Teachers plan their lessons well. Pupils listen carefully and respond to the questions with enthusiasm, offering their thoughts and ideas. This enables them to develop confidence to question, discuss facts and issues with each other. Religious education lessons contribute well to developing the pupils' sense of right and wrong. They were enthralled about the story of David and Goliath, which they heard in collective worship, and they recognise that its meaning could be applied to themselves.
117. Religious education is managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has developed a comprehensive scheme for the subject. She provides valuable guidelines to support her colleagues in their planning. However, an effective system for assessing pupils' attainment and progress is not yet in place.