

INSPECTION REPORT

ARDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

Sparkhill
Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103324

Headteacher: Mr Nick Lambert

Reporting inspector: Ian Nelson
2220

Dates of inspection: 25th - 28th September 2000

Inspection number: 224104

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Baker Street
Sparkhill
Birmingham

Postcode: B11 4SF

Telephone number: 0121 772 7702

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Jack Rivitt

Date of previous inspection: 8th July 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Ian Nelson OIN 02220	Registered inspector	Physical education	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed?
Chris Field OIN 09479	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Carole Bond OIN 26405	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Special educational needs Science Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Roger Salt OIN 15223	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology	Staffing, accommodation and resources for learning
Carolyn Powell OIN 27369	Team inspector	Geography History Areas of learning for children in the foundation stage	
Megan Spark OIN 18342	Team inspector	English Art Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language	
Peter Sandall OIN 25771	Team inspector	Music Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Judith Hicks OIN 20263	Team inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Teaching and learning

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

The school was inspected by a team of eight inspectors led by Mr Ian Nelson. This is a summary of the full inspection report which is available from the school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number of full-time pupils	447 from 3 to 11 (above average)
Pupils with English as an additional language	98% (very high)
Pupils entitled to free school meals	44% (well above average)
Pupils on the register of special educational needs	25% (above average)

This is a large primary and nursery school serving the Sparkhill area of Birmingham, an inner city area where unemployment is high. It draws its pupils mainly from families of the local Pakistani community. Most year groups are currently housed in mobile classrooms with building work scheduled to start next year to extend the main school. The attainment of pupils when they enter the nursery is well below average and many do not speak English.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. The very good leadership and management of the head and senior staff have led to standards rising in English, mathematics and science over recent years. Teaching is good, particularly at Key Stage 2 and the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides very effective leadership
- Good teaching, particularly at Key Stage 2, is raising standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and behave very well
- The school has very good systems for encouraging good behaviour, attitudes and attendance among pupils
- The school provides very good opportunities for the social development of pupils
- The quality of information provided for parents is excellent

What could be improved

- Although standards are rising at Key Stage 1 they are still below those of schools with similar pupils

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1996. Since then standards have risen in English, mathematics and science and have been maintained at a high level in information and communication technology. The school has addressed all the key issues from the previous report and has also improved attendance, the quality of teaching and behaviour and the number of exclusions has reduced. The quality of learning in some of the foundation subjects has suffered as a result of focusing on national initiatives. The school has introduced successfully the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Overall the school has improved well since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	E	D	E	C	Well above average A Above average B Average C Below average D Well below average E Very low E*
Mathematics	E	E	D	B	
Science	E*	C	B	A	

The table shows that while standards in the 1999 tests were well below the national average in English, below average in mathematics and above average in science, the school did as well as similar schools in English, better than similar schools in mathematics and significantly better in science. The results of the year 2000 tests show a further rise in standards in all three subjects. In 1997 standards in science were in the bottom 5% of schools nationally. Standards have risen substantially over the last three years. The school has achieved the targets it set and is adjusting future ones upwards to make them more challenging in the light of the pupils' achievements. Standards of work seen during the inspection in science and information and communication technology were above average. Standards in English, religious education, art and design, design and technology, geography, history and physical education were in line with expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in mathematics and music at both key stages and in history and geography at Key Stage 1 were judged to be below the expected levels. Given that most pupils enter school with very little English most of them achieve good standards by the time they leave at 11 years.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are keen to learn and they enjoy their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. There have been no exclusions and pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on very well together and show good levels of responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance levels are below those of schools nationally but they are improving.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good

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

Overall teaching is good. It was satisfactory or better in 96% of lessons seen during the inspection. Only three unsatisfactory lessons (4%) were observed. Teaching was very good in 9% of lessons and good in another 42%. Teaching in English and mathematics is mainly good which is why standards are rising as fast as they are. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is effective and good teaching of information and communication (ICT) leads to above average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and are making good progress. Occasionally activities are misjudged or mistimed and teachers do not deal firmly or quickly enough with inappropriate behaviour which slows the pace of learning. In most lessons however teachers share the purpose of the lesson with the pupils, have a good grasp of the subject matter and enjoy good relationships with pupils which ensures that they learn effectively. Teachers capture and hold the interest of their pupils and build on their growing enthusiasm for learning. Because they have a clear idea of what pupils have learned previously in English, mathematics, science and ICT teachers provide work at the right levels to ensure that all pupils make effective progress. A lack of confidence and knowledge in music means that pupils do not learn as effectively as they might in that subject.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All subjects are planned for and the school is making good progress in revising schemes of work in line with new national guidelines.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. The school needs to monitor closely the new arrangements for supporting pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good at raising standards in reading and writing but less effective in improving pupils' spoken English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for moral and social development is very good with plenty of opportunities for pupils to understand right and wrong and develop social skills.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school cares well for its pupils and has very effective systems for tracking the progress that pupils make and setting them targets for improvement.

The school has a good partnership with parents and works hard to involve them more fully in their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and senior staff have clear roles and responsibilities which they fulfil effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors are hardworking and committed to continuous improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has very good systems in place for checking how well it is doing and what it needs to do to get even better.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school has very clear targets for improvement and uses its resources well to reach those targets.

The school has a good number of suitably qualified and experienced staff and good resources in most subjects. Staff compensate well for the scattered nature of the accommodation and the single hall shared by so many classes by creating warm and welcoming classrooms in difficult circumstances. Senior staff and governors are aware of, and apply, the principles of best value.

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 • Behaviour in school is good • The teaching is good • The school is well led and managed • The school expects children to work hard and do their best 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework their children receive.

Out of 240 questionnaires sent out, 58 were returned. The inspectors agree with the parents' positive comments about the school and think that the amount of homework is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 Children start school with low levels of attainment and most speak hardly any English. Many children begin nursery at a level that is well below expectations, with many children having very little spoken English. This is confirmed by the initial assessments of children in the nursery. By the time they are ready to start in year 1, although making satisfactory progress in the foundation stage, the majority of children have not reached the early learning goals in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. In physical development children achieve the expected levels.

2 The national test results for Key Stage 1 in 1999 show standards in reading and writing to be well below the national average and results in mathematics to be very low. When compared to the results of schools with similar pupils the reading and writing results are well below average and the mathematics results are very low. The tests taken in summer 2000 show that standards are rising. Over the last four years standards have fluctuated year by year but in reading and writing they are now rising faster than standards nationally. In mathematics standards were falling between 1997 and 1999 but the year 2000 test results indicate that they are now rising again.

3 In terms of average points scores in the 1999 tests pupils are around two terms behind in reading and writing and three terms behind in mathematics. In reading this represents a good improvement since 1996 when they were nearly three and a half terms behind, but in writing the improvement has been much less marked, from two terms behind in 1996 to just under two terms behind in 1999. In mathematics the improvement has been from nearly four terms behind in 1996 to three terms behind in 1999. Girls have improved more than boys in reading and writing, particularly between 1998 and 1999. Standards of boys' writing appear to have declined slightly over the four years from just under a term behind in 1996 to two terms behind in 1999. The school has also identified this trend and is seeking ways to redress it.

4 The Key Stage 2 national test results for 1999 show that in English pupils attained well below the national average, in mathematics they were below average and in science they were above average. When compared to the results of schools with similar pupils the English results were average, the mathematics results were above average and the science results were well above average. The year 2000 results show a further rise in standards in all three subjects. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level 4 or above has risen by 14% in English, by 5% in mathematics and by 10% in science. Standards have improved substantially since 1995. Standards in all three subjects have been rising faster than standards nationally over recent years, particularly in science and mathematics.

5 In terms of the average points scores in the 1999 tests pupils are around one and a third terms behind in English, three quarters of a term behind in mathematics and over a term ahead in science. Given that when these pupils took the national tests at the age of 7 they were nearly three and a half terms behind in reading and one and three quarter terms behind in writing they have made good progress over the key stage. In mathematics they were nearly four terms behind so they have made very good progress in catching up in the junior years. The progress made by girls in mathematics and science has been faster than that made by boys over the four years.

In mathematics girls have gone from three and a half terms behind to in line with where they should be, while in science they have gained over five terms, going from two and three quarter terms behind to two and a half ahead over the key stage. In English the improvements have been about the same for both boys and girls. Overall these pupils have made very good progress in these subjects over their time in the junior classes. In comparison with schools with similar numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals the Key Stage 2 results show that standards in this school are close to average in English, above average in mathematics and well above average in science. However when compared to schools which had similar standards at the end of Key Stage 1 the school is well above average in all three subjects. The school has already exceeded its targets for 2001 in English and is revising them upwards to ensure they remain challenging.

6 The inspection findings confirm rising standards at both key stages in English, mathematics and science. Standards in English are below average at Key Stage 1 and average at Key Stage 2. In mathematics standards are below average at both key stages while in science standards are average at Key Stage 1 and above average at Key Stage 2. Standards are average at the end of Key Stage 1 in information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, and physical education. They are below average in religious education, geography, history and music largely because pupils do not have the English language skills and understanding they need. At Key Stage 2 standards are above average in information and communication technology, average in religious education, art and design, design and technology, geography, history and physical education and below average in music.

7 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets. The systems for identifying and supporting them have been effective in helping them to achieve well. However these systems have been changed because of a recent turnover of staff and the school needs to keep a close check to ensure that these pupils continue to get the good quality support they have had in the past. The setting arrangements in English, mathematics and science help to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and those identified as gifted and talented receive work at an appropriate level.

8 Standards in speaking and listening are below average at the end of both key stages. While pupils listen attentively and follow instructions they are less confident and competent in their use of spoken English. Teachers use questions to encourage pupils to express themselves and extend their vocabulary but there are too few planned opportunities for discussions, debates or presentations. Where such activities are planned, as in year 4 history for example, the pupils respond well and use appropriate language, prepare relevant well thought out questions and follow up the responses with further spontaneous questions.

9 In reading, standards are below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and average at the end of Key Stage 2. Although by the age of seven pupils read the words of their reading books accurately and correctly and have ways of working out words they do not know, their level of understanding of the text is poor at times. By the age of eleven pupils have developed much better understanding of what they are reading and are gaining confidence in library and research skills. The successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy is helping to raise standards at both key stages by introducing pupils to a wide range of appropriate literature in a variety of forms.

10 Standards in writing are below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and are close to average at the end of Key Stage 2. The most able pupils write good stories, poems and factual pieces using correct grammar, spellings and punctuation. There are only a few pupils who are not able to write accurately and correctly by the age of eleven. The introduction of 'booster' classes has helped to raise the standards of lower attaining pupils. At the end of Key Stage 1 standards are below average largely because pupils do not have a strong grasp of English by this age. They are beginning to use their understanding of the sounds different letters make to help them with spelling and they are starting to write in sentences with correct punctuation at times. They write simple stories.

11 In mathematics standards are below average at the end of both key stages. By year 2, pupils count forwards and backwards in fives and tens, and are beginning to double numbers below ten. Progress at this age is inhibited by a lack of understanding of English with pupils sometimes getting confused over mathematical terms. This makes it difficult for some pupils to explain how they have worked out a particular problem. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils enjoy exploring patterns of 9 on a number square to reinforce their knowledge of their multiplication tables. They use all four operations to solve number problems with increasing accuracy and show a greater understanding of mathematical terms. They are beginning to understand the relationship between fractions and decimals and use calculators to do conversions with increasing confidence. Progress over the key stage is good and gets faster towards the end of the junior years as pupils gain confidence in their use of English.

12 Standards in science have improved significantly over recent years particularly at Key Stage 2. This is because of a combination of good teaching, planning and assessment as well as setting pupils by ability to ensure that they get hard enough work. In year 2 pupils know about pushing and pulling objects and record their findings in simple charts and writing. By year 6 pupils have made good progress and understand that they need evidence to support their ideas, that tests need to be fair and how to ensure this and they record their findings in a variety of ways including the effective use of the computer.

13 Progress in English, mathematics and science is good overall, getting better at Key Stage 2 as pupils understanding of spoken and written English makes a positive impact. The school has worked hard to raise standards in these subjects and the effective introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has helped.

14 The school sets challenging targets for achievement which are regularly reviewed and revised upwards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15 Most children enter the nursery class with few skills in personal, social and emotional development and a few are initially very distressed. In both year groups children are learning to work and play together, although for many nursery children these are new experiences. Children behave well most of the time. When they do not, it is sometimes because the work is not suitable for their level of development and is not well matched to their needs.

16 Almost all pupils have very positive attitudes to school, and their enthusiastic approach to learning has been sustained since the last inspection. They are usually eager to make progress in lessons, making a lively contribution to oral sessions and mental mathematics. Older pupils respond well to challenges such as being asked to complete a task in a given time or work with a partner to solve a problem. Most try

hard and work with good concentration. Constructive attitudes and consideration for others are well demonstrated by the positive spirit with which pupils participate in group activities and games during 'circle time'. Many take full advantage of extra opportunities provided for them, for example by attending homework clubs or taking part in extra-curricular activities. Team games are popular, with over-subscribed football and netball clubs.

17 Behaviour is generally good, as reported at the time of the last inspection. The pupils are invariably courteous and well-mannered. In most lessons there is a prompt response to instructions and questions, and the pupils work quietly and purposefully. They can be trusted to handle equipment responsibly in practical sessions such as science and art. The pupils move around the school sensibly, for example entering the hall quietly at the start of song practice. On rare occasions when the teacher is not firm enough, however, some are capable of becoming noisy and distracted. This was seen once or twice during the inspection. From the nursery onwards the pupils play constructively together outside, but at this early stage in the school year some of the least mature reception children find it difficult to act in a controlled manner in the open space of the school hall during physical education sessions. Older pupils play in a friendly way during breaks, only occasionally becoming boisterous. Inspectors found no indications of bullying, and there have been no recent exclusions.

18 Relationships are very good. The pupils are friendly and communicative with staff and visitors, and they like and respect their teachers. They get on well with one another, too, collaborating well in classroom tasks or working independently on their own initiative. Pairs of pupils work well together when sharing machines in the computer suite. Older pupils are quick to give their time and attention to the younger ones, as when those in year 6 provide one-to-one help for year 2 pupils learning to sew. These pupils are kind and attentive when they take turns to help staff deal with minor playground bumps and bruises. Those involved as representatives on the school council take their responsibilities seriously, showing real maturity and commitment to the school community. All these opportunities contribute to the pupils' good personal development.

19 Attendance is improving but remains below the national average despite the best efforts of the school. Extended holidays abroad are the most significant factor and these do have a significant impact on the achievement of the pupils involved. Most pupils arrive at school punctually at the start of sessions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20 Teaching is good overall and has consistent strengths at Key Stage 2, a key factor in improving standards. During the inspection about two-thirds of the lessons seen in the junior classes were judged good or very good. Virtually all the teaching observed at the foundation stage and Key Stage 1 was also thoroughly competent, but here there were fewer good and very good lessons, and teaching did not show the same flair. The relatively high proportion of newly qualified teachers in reception and Key Stage 1 provides a partial explanation. Taking the school as a whole, around one lesson in every ten was very good, with only three lessons (4%) unsatisfactory. This represents a marked improvement since the last inspection.

21 Teachers almost invariably show a secure grasp of the topics they are handling, with particularly good subject knowledge shown in English, mathematics and information and communication technology, especially at Key Stage 2. In a demanding year 6 lesson, for example, the difference between skimming and scanning was very

clearly explained as the pupils searched their text for prepositions, whilst pupils in year 5 were expertly shown how to use a spreadsheet to solve multiplication problems. In the best lessons there is close attention to subject-specific vocabulary to ensure that the pupils have a grasp of key terms such as 'title', 'dialogue' and 'percentage' at the appropriate stage. Geographical terms were particularly well explored in one year 5 lesson. Occasionally, however, there is not enough attention to the necessary language, notably in music where teachers' subject expertise is not strong. In all other subject areas teachers' knowledge is at least satisfactory, and the teaching of personal and social education during 'circle time' is often good.

22 Basic skills are soundly taught at the foundation stage and in Key Stage 1. At the start of the nursery year the children are effectively taught to follow a story line, to share books with others and to acquire simple mathematical understanding through sorting, ordering and counting. Throughout the foundation stage, appropriate priority is given to listening skills and the acquisition of essential vocabulary in English. Number and phonic skills are also systematically taught at Key Stage 1, ensuring that the pupils make steady progress. Teachers rightly focus on reading for meaning in years 1 and 2, adapting their approach in group reading sessions to meet the needs of pupils for whom English is an additional language. A very successful lesson in year 2, for example, developed the skills of retelling a narrative and predicting how it might end. Support teachers and staff make a strong contribution to skills development at this stage, especially by providing bilingual support that is at best highly effective.

23 The teaching of essential skills is very good at Key Stage 2. In a year 3 lesson, for example, the pupils working on the computer were introduced to screen logo through the legend of the Minotaur. With their interest and imagination captured by the story, they were very keen to practise their left and right turns to travel through the 'maze'. There is particularly good provision for older pupils who have fallen behind the others because of limited English or special educational needs. In the mixed year 5/6 literacy and numeracy sessions, lower attaining pupils make good progress because of detailed planning to match individual needs, very clear explanations and enthusiastic encouragement by staff. Throughout the school satisfactory use is made of homework for reading practice, learning spellings and number facts, and completing unfinished work.

24 Good relationships are seen in lessons throughout the school, with some effective, firm yet positive management of the pupils. At best, staff set high standards and expect a lot of the pupils, spurring them on to achieve more and developing their self-confidence by judicious praise and encouragement. Some staff make good use of gentle humour to establish a relaxed, calm climate for learning. Occasionally, however, teachers are not quick enough to correct pupils for fidgeting or inattention, and on rare occasions unsatisfactory behaviour is not adequately controlled.

25 Teaching methods are varied and effective. Almost all staff make the purpose of each lesson clear to the pupils at the start, and there is often a reminder about the learning that has led up to the present session. Teachers are skilled at eliciting information and extending understanding through well-judged questions. Whilst almost all staff use appropriate vocabulary, enunciate clearly and provide a good model of standard English, not enough is done to ensure that the pupils practise speaking in proper sentences in lessons. Some staff are too ready to accept very brief answers from pupils with limited English.

26 The most successful teachers use resources skilfully to make ideas clear and accessible to all the pupils. A simple diagram on the board illustrated place value graphically in one mathematics lesson, for example, whilst in numeracy sessions

individual white boards are used to good effect, allowing the teacher to assess the pupils' understanding at a glance. Ongoing assessment of children's learning is not well enough developed in the foundation stage, but is satisfactory in years 1 and 2 and good further up the school. With literacy development particularly well charted, it is relatively easy for teachers to provide the right level of challenge for all the pupils. Information and communication technology is well used to support learning in many areas of the curriculum.

27 Teaching is rarely unsatisfactory, and there is no general pattern of shortcomings. Where lessons are occasionally unsuccessful or borderline, this is usually because activities have been misjudged or mistimed, and plans go awry. Sometimes the pupils do not respond as intended and inattention, or low-level misbehaviour, is not dealt with firmly enough. As would be expected, this slows down learning.

28 Learning is good overall, improving as pupils progress through the school. Older pupils respond well to challenge, for example when they have a task to complete against the clock, whilst lower attaining pupils in years 5 and 6 make considerable efforts to meet the high expectations of staff. The pupils work hard in mental mathematics sessions, helping to sustain a good pace. When teaching is imaginative, the pupils respond eagerly and with interest, as in one session attended by an actor in role as Henry VIII. Here the class engaged whole-heartedly in the role-play, following up prepared questions with supplementary questions that showed careful listening and good concentration. When teachers explain clearly what they expect the class or group to accomplish, pupils become well aware of what they are learning and understand how to improve their work.

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

29 The school has improved curricular provision in some subjects since the last inspection in 1996, and there is a whole-school review currently in progress. The school is effectively developing a curriculum in line with the new guidelines for the foundation stage for children under five. The school has implemented very successfully the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies, while continuing to develop good provision for science and information and communication technology. Standards are rising rapidly in these subjects. Organisation of the curriculum, by teaching pupils in Key Stage 2 in sets, makes a major contribution to improving standards. The success of these areas is strengthened by the very effective links the school has made with the local community. There have been a number of changes in providing for children in the foundation stage since the previous inspection because of new national guidelines. The arrangements made for the nursery and reception children have involved considerable re-organisation and are in the early stages of development, particularly for reception children. The school is fully committed to the new National Curriculum guidelines and is making good progress towards implementing them fully. The recent focus on national initiatives including the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has led to a lack of progress in developing music, design and technology, history and geography which need to be updated and improved.

30 Statutory curricular requirements are met for all subjects including religious education. The school has whole-school determination so that teaching can more accurately reflect the faith of the school community. There are appropriate amounts of time allocated to the foundation subjects except for music, and pupils have the opportunity to experience an appropriate range in their learning. Care is taken in

whole-school planning to ensure that pupils make appropriate progress from year to year. The recent appointments of teachers to develop work in all subjects that will promote literacy and numeracy are already being effective. Most subjects successfully follow programmes of work adapted from the national guidelines. There is good provision for health education, including drugs awareness, involving the school nurses and using the local authority health education caravan. Personal and social education is effectively developed through circle time and through mediation classes for older pupils, and this has a significant impact on pupils' attitudes to school. The governors have elected not to provide sex education.

31 Pupils' learning is very much enriched by the provision of many successful lunchtime and after-school clubs, including homework, drama, Internet, football, netball and gardening. Booster clubs held in the Easter holidays made a strong impact on learning in numeracy for the year 6 pupils who attended last year. All year groups enjoy trips once or twice each school year, and visitors to the school enhance learning through the interesting subject matter they introduce such as batik work. The school enjoys strong partnership links with nearby schools, and organises appropriate transfer arrangements when year 6 pupils move to secondary education.

32 The organisation of the curriculum ensures good equality of access to worthwhile tasks for the majority of pupils. In most classes work set is relevant to pupils' abilities. However there were observed instances of boys letting the girls in their group do most of the work in a given task and these were not challenged by the teacher. There is a sound policy for equal opportunities underpinning the school's successful promotion of opportunities for all and its opposition to racist attitudes. Policy and practice emphasise the value of individuals.

33 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well organised and successful. The pupils receive a broad and stimulating curriculum, and individual education plans contain specific targets for pupils to achieve. Pupils receive support in the classroom through setting arrangements or through classroom assistants. Particular emphasis is given to pupils in years 3 and 4 through the provision of a withdrawal group for literacy and numeracy. The special needs co-ordinator, in consultation with class teachers, support assistants and special needs teachers, ensures that all pupils receive the right levels of support. Now that the special needs co-ordinator has returned to full-time classroom responsibility, the effectiveness of these previously successful arrangements will need careful monitoring. Support for pupils with special needs in the foundation stage is currently limited and therefore less effective in helping them to make good progress.

34 There is good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils. Within this positive picture the school ensures that there are very good opportunities for pupils to make progress in social and moral areas. Cultural awareness is good. Opportunities for spiritual development are less well defined, and while this aspect is satisfactory it remains a relative weakness.

35 While both religious education lessons and acts of corporate worship offer opportunities for reflection, these tend to be brief and tacked on at the end, rather than central to the theme being studied. They lack focus and the atmosphere that, for example, carefully chosen music might provide. The school's planning across the curriculum does not identify likely opportunities, which may arise in other subjects, for pupils to reflect on the values and beliefs of themselves and others.

36 The school actively encourages its pupils to appreciate the cultural diversity around them. Visits are made to different places of worship and all pupils study four

religions. Artists and actors come into the school, as well as dancers and musicians from different disciplines. Local museums are used to support work in history and there are good links with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

37 The school's code of conduct is a product of staff discussion and is clearly displayed in all areas of the school, including every classroom. Teachers use it as their first point of reference to encourage good behaviour. The school is very clear about the values it promotes and the expectations it has of pupils. Where circle time is used in classes pupils are encouraged to consider equal opportunities and the balance between rights and responsibilities. They are encouraged to consider morality in their lessons, for example when studying environmental issues, or historical events such as slavery or the Jarrow march.

38 There is a strong emphasis on the school as a community, and pupils are encouraged to contribute to this as they get older, benefiting everyone. The school council has representatives from every class, and its recommendations are acted on where possible. Year 5 pupils are paired with those in year 2 to hear them read before school starts. All year 5 pupils train as 'mediators', and those chosen for this role in year 6 help to solve playground disputes. A very good example of 'putting something back' is the summer fair organised by year 6. The money raised is used to fund the 'life skills' programme of the following year 6 pupils. The school also raises funds for both local and national charities. The school's successful citizenship programme is a strength of the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39 Strengths in the pastoral aspects of school life reported at the time of the previous inspection have all been sustained, and in some respects improved still further.

40 The school is very caring and has well organised procedures for ensuring the well-being of pupils and as a result children are happy to come to school. Parents have high regard for the way in which the school helps children feel safe and secure, and are positive about entrusting their children to the care of staff. Child protection procedures are good. The school keeps a watching brief on children it feels may be vulnerable. Close attention is paid to health and safety matters and risks are appropriately assessed. The procedures for monitoring attendance are very effective in improving levels of attendance, even though they fall below those of most primary schools. Staff know pupils well, and give encouragement to support pupils' whole development. An example is the citizenship project that is widening their horizons about the roles that ordinary people play in shaping the future of their community. The school is helping prepare pupils for the next stage of their education and later life very effectively.

41 Children are well supported when they join the nursery. At this early stage in the new term the focus for the staff was quite rightly on helping children to settle without anxiety. The atmosphere in the nursery is calm and staff show patience in supporting the few boys who found it distressing to leave their parents for the first time. Useful routines support the nursery team's consistent practice in reinforcing what is expected in the way of behaviour and attitudes to learning. This gives the children a firm foundation for successful learning in the future. Suitable arrangements are in place to ensure the children transfer smoothly to reception in the year in which they are five.

42 Pupils in both key stages are given effective educational support and guidance, though much of it is informal and not consistently kept as a written record in subjects other than English and mathematics. Because the teachers know the pupils well most needs are responded to appropriately. Satisfactory support is given to pupils with special educational needs who benefit from specific targets that are written into individual education plans. Sometimes classroom support staff are not used as well as they might be to help pupils who are experiencing difficulty with their work.

43 The procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' good behaviour are very good. A team points system is well liked by the pupils who see the award of certificates very positively in helping them aim high, and do their best. The school tackles instances of bullying effectively and does not tolerate any aggressive behaviour or wrongdoing against others.

44 The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in most aspects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are very good. Senior managers in the school have a clear view of who is doing best in the school and why, and have established rigorous systems to help improve rates of progress and raise standards of attainment. For example, highly effective use is made of national test data to analyse how well girls and boys in the school are achieving compared to the national picture and to then set individual targets in literacy and numeracy year on year. The school has recently invested in computer software to aid future work in tracking and target setting. Statutory requirements for assessment in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and science are fully met. There is however, less evidence of assessment in other subjects.

45 Teachers maintain a useful record of how well their pupils are achieving in core subjects and this information is passed on at the end of the year to the next class teacher. There is useful evaluation of how well the class or group has managed to achieve against one or more general learning objectives. In lessons there is inconsistent use of pupils' self-assessment or individual target setting, although good examples were observed in literacy and numeracy hours. Often good use is made of plenary time at the close of lessons to evaluate how well the pupils have done but this is not always logged nor used consistently to guide the next lesson and is a missed opportunity. This is something the school could usefully give attention to as part of improving assessment practice.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46 The school has worked hard to maintain a very productive working partnership with parents since the time of the previous inspection. Resources are targeted specifically at supporting home-school liaison so that parents are encouraged to play a partnership role in education right from the first day their children start school.

47 The quality of information provided for parents is excellent. The school puts in enormous efforts to ensure that all parents have a full understanding of everything that is sent home. For example the home-school liaison teacher has started an *Inside-Out* project which uses photographic displays and notice boards to ensure that important information is passed on in a simple and straightforward manner. Virtually all parents have signed up to a home school agreement which has been positive in setting a clear statement of intent on both sides. Some parents completing the pre-inspection questionnaire showed concerns about homework. The school has recognised this as an area that needs attention when consulting about next year's home-school agreement. The school has carried out its own surveys of parents to find out what they think about the school and the level of parental satisfaction is high.

48 There is a room at school for parents to use. A number of courses are organised weekly, some intended to raise parents' awareness about the value of education. During the week of inspection some 20 parents took part in a literacy lesson, and then stayed on for a talk by a year 2 teacher explaining how they could help reading and writing at home. Many parents visit the school for a variety of reasons over the course of a year, for example to support school sports day, concerts and special assemblies. There are currently no parents supporting work in classrooms and this is an area the school would like to target for improvement.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49 Overall leadership is good. The very effective leadership of the headteacher and senior staff has led to sustained improvements and rising standards over recent years. The head has a very clear vision for the future of the school and has effectively shared this with staff and governors who are all committed to a programme of continuous improvement. This commitment has led to the school taking effective action to address the areas for improvement highlighted in the previous report. All staff with a management post have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and fulfil them well. There is a planned programme for giving subject leaders a stronger role in checking the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects. Currently this task is usually carried out by the head and deputy and includes looking at teachers' planning and seeing them teach lessons, mainly in English, mathematics and science. This has led to better teaching since the last inspection and consequently the standard of pupils' work has improved leading to better results in these subjects. The recent changes in staff means that some subject co-ordinators are new to their role and that science is without a co-ordinator at the moment. Recent staff changes have also led to a change in the way support for pupils with special educational needs is managed. The school needs to monitor closely the impact of this move to ensure that it continues to provide high quality support as the previous system did. There is a clear strategy for training staff for their management roles as well as in specific subjects to ensure that they carry out their jobs as effectively as possible. All training builds on staff development interviews which help to identify what people are good at and what they might be able to improve in their work. The school has a good induction programme for new staff and a clear programme for introducing a system of performance management.

50 As well as a thorough and rigorous system for checking the quality of teaching and learning the school also has very good systems for tracking pupils' progress. This ensures that the school has a very clear view of what is going well and of what could be improved further. This evaluation informs the planning the school does for the future. The school development plan was criticised in the last inspection report and since then it has improved. It is drawn up by all staff working together to identify priorities for the future and includes clear targets, timescales and costs, all very much focused on raising the attainment of pupils. The school development plan is a good example of the consultative style of management upon which the school is based. It identifies appropriate targets and how these will be achieved. The budget is then set to reflect the priorities in the development plan. The latest audit report commented favourably on the close link between the school development plan and the budget setting process. Careful financial planning ensures an effective use of resources with an appropriate use being made of funds designated for specific purposes. The school has attracted extra funding through bidding for specific grants. Day-to-day financial management is effective and the latest audit report contained only minor recommendations which the school has addressed.

51 The governors fulfil their statutory role satisfactorily. They have developed an appropriate committee structure with clear terms of reference. Governors visit the school to see for themselves how well it is working. They are growing in their awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses and in their confidence in tackling their duties effectively. The governing body plays a full part in setting the strategic goals for the school and in monitoring its progress towards achieving them. Governors monitor the budget carefully and are aware of the principles of best value. They recognise the need to ensure that spending decisions result in rising standards but do not yet have clear and coherent systems for checking that specific decisions do so. Governors are hard working and committed and are keen to attend training courses so that they can improve their effectiveness.

52 The school is staffed by an appropriate number of suitably qualified teachers. There is a good mix of experienced staff and young teachers who have recently joined the school. The three newly qualified teachers are integrated through an effective programme of support and induction. All subjects and aspects of the curriculum have co-ordinators except science and assessment. The school plans to make appointments shortly. A good number of talented support staff play a valuable part by helping pupils with special educational needs and English language difficulties and by providing classroom assistance. They are most effective when deployed to develop the speaking skills of younger pupils in order that they may have greater involvement in their lessons. The school is well served by the efficiency of its secretarial, catering and premises staff.

53 The school premises consist of a main building, an adjacent house and several temporary classrooms. While this accommodation is used efficiently and at times ingeniously, there are several unsatisfactory features. The scattered nature of the accommodation creates difficulties in movement and communication between the different sections of the school. The school hall in the main building was designed for much smaller pupil numbers and is of inadequate size for the whole school to assemble. There are still toilets which can only be accessed from outside. Since the time of the last inspection, refurbishments to the temporary buildings have provided work areas and improved storage. Recent modifications to the main building have created suitable areas for the establishment of a library and computer suite. The caretaker's house provides additional rooms that are used effectively to offer language support to small groups of pupils. Markings on the playground promote a range of activities but the playground itself is divided by the buildings into small areas that are difficult to supervise. There are no grassed areas available which limits the opportunities for sport and other activities.

54 There are good quality resources for numeracy, literacy and science. Essential equipment is based in classrooms where its condition is monitored by support staff. Larger and less frequently needed equipment to support practical work in mathematics and science is well organised and housed in a temporary classroom. The resources for other areas of the curriculum are appropriate to the pupils' needs except in design and technology where the resources are unsatisfactory. There is a programme of continuous improvement that is gradually addressing the needs of all subjects. The library is an attractive resource which provides easy access to books for young and more advanced readers. The school has made a substantial investment in providing extra computers for classrooms and a computer suite where whole classes at a time can develop skills in information technology. Pupils and their teachers are making effective use of this excellent resource to maintain high standards in information and communication technology.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

This is an effective school that should now aim to raise standards further, particularly at KS1 by:

- **Improving pupils' spoken English through more planned opportunities for them to use it in all subjects and through improved use of assessment and recording of pupils' progress in speaking and listening; (paragraphs 8, 21, 25, 44, 56, 75, 76, 79)**
- **Giving a higher priority to staffing and resources at the foundation stage; (paragraph 59)**
- **Raising further the quality of teaching through sharing the best practice in school; (paragraphs 20, 23, 24, 25, 27, 49, 73, 81, 101)**
- **Continuing to develop those subjects that have not been priorities recently; (paragraphs 6, 29, 30, 44, 96, 102, 105, 117, 118, 119, 120, 122, 125)**
- **Continuing to improve the attendance of pupils. (paragraphs 19, 40)**

PROVISION FOR PUPILS FOR WHOM ENGLISH IS AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

55 Approximately 98% of the pupils are considered to have English as an additional language and this is a fundamental reason for the low attainment in English in Key Stage 1. The children make good progress in the foundation stage where they are well supported by bilingual assistants who develop language skills effectively across all areas of the curriculum. The children's skills in spoken English are, however, still very low on entry to Key Stage 1. Their poor spoken English is affecting pupils' access to, and attainment in many subjects. Results show that although pupils make sound progress as they move through Key Stage 1, standards in English, mathematics, history, geography, music and religious education are still below the national average by the age of seven.

56 Basic English reading and writing skills are effectively promoted across the curriculum in the foundation stage and bilingual staff in nursery and reception use their linguistic expertise effectively to enable pupils to develop a clear understanding of concepts. Teachers are careful to give clear instructions to pupils and to demonstrate what they expect their pupils to learn. However there are insufficient planned opportunities to develop clear and confident speaking skills and few teachers put enough emphasis on this in lessons, particularly in Key Stage 1. Staff take care to model new vocabulary clearly but they do not always reinforce subject specific vocabulary sufficiently for pupils who have limited English, giving them planned opportunities to practise new structures and new vocabulary across all subjects. Teachers and non-teaching staff give sound support within lessons when working alongside small groups of pupils but this support is not matched to identified needs and no targets for language development are set. There is therefore no certain way of ensuring that progress is being made and that the level of support is effective.

57 Funds designated for the support of pupils with English as an additional language are appropriately spent. Bilingual staff work effectively alongside children throughout the foundation stage although they are not additional to the staffing requirements of the department. Further support is available in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. A bilingual parent partnership worker works at the school and organises adult education activities and works very effectively alongside parents of children in the foundation stage and Key Stage 1.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

79

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	9%	42%	45%	4%		

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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	39	408
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	196

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	111

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	477

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.69
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.63
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	36	29	65

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	16	19
	Girls	21	23	25
	Total	43	39	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71(51)	60(62)	68(49)
	National	79(80)	83(81)	86(84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	22	20
	Girls	24	26	17
	Total	47	48	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72(62)	74(52)	57(61)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	31	29	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	15	22
	Girls	20	19	25
	Total	34	34	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56(54)	56(44)	79(61)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	18	23
	Girls	22	19	23
	Total	35	37	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58(58)	51(51)	76(71)
	National	67(65)	69(65)	75(72)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	9
Pakistani	272
Bangladeshi	60
Chinese	0
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	8

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y R– Y 6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	20.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	408
Average class size	29.1

Education support staff: Y R– Y 6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	211

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	39 FTE

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	42

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	930340
Total expenditure	934304
Expenditure per pupil	2018
Balance brought forward from previous year	44759
Balance carried forward to next year	40795

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	240
Number of questionnaires returned	58

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	25	5	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	40	7	0	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	39	2	2	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	25	30	7	2
The teaching is good.	54	39	4	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	39	4	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	53	39	4	0	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	32	9	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	53	35	5	0	7
The school is well led and managed.	53	40	5	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	42	5	2	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	35	9	2	11

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

58 Many children begin nursery at a level that is well below expectations with many having little or no spoken English. This is confirmed by the initial assessment of children in the nursery. By the time they are ready to start in year 1, although making satisfactory progress in the foundation stage, the majority of children do not reach the early learning goals in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. In physical development children achieve the expected levels. Children are organised into three groups according to their abilities, in the two reception classes. The school is effectively developing a curriculum in line with the new guidelines for the foundation stage.

59 Children who have special learning needs are taught effectively within the class or ability group which meets some of their needs. However, children with specific emotional and behavioural special needs are not yet supported by additional staff in their activities and make little progress. This affects the learning of all the other children, particularly those in the reception classes, due to the demands made on staff by these children. The school is awaiting one child's statement of special educational needs and is reviewing the staffing for the foundation stage. Five children with special educational needs transferred from the nursery to the reception classes.

60 Most nursery children attend either a morning or an afternoon session and transfer to the reception classes to start their full-time attendance at the beginning of the academic year in which they become five.

Personal, social and emotional development

61 Many children enter the nursery class with few skills in personal and social development and many are initially very distressed. By the time they leave the reception classes many children have not achieved the early learning goals in this area of learning. Although teachers encourage children to work and play together happily they are less successful in providing the play situations which encourage children to be more independent, to confidently try new experiences, and to think for themselves. Teaching is satisfactory in this area of learning.

62 In both year groups children are learning to work and play together, although for many nursery children these experiences are new. They tentatively paint patterns and squeeze and roll the play dough. Children are more confident when playing outside and enjoy the outdoor activities. Children in the reception classes work as part of a group, learning to take turns and show consideration towards each other, for example, in a music lesson when encouraged to pass around a triangle to repeat a sound in turn. Children mostly behave well and when they do not, it is generally because their task is not suitable for their level of development.

63 Adults provide good role models for children, always treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This develops a trusting relationship and helps the children to understand each other's point of view. For example, when sharing the story of *Goldilocks*, children are encouraged to think about how each character feels at different points in the story and whether their actions are right or wrong.

Communication, language and literacy

64 Initially, nursery children mostly play silently, using their first language to communicate with their mothers and fathers or in play situations such as outside play, home corner role play or when responding to the bilingual nursery nurses.

65 Although the quality of teaching is sound, by the time children reach the end of the reception year many have not achieved the early learning goals, particularly in spoken English. In role-play for instance nursery and reception children use spoken English when an adult is 'playing' with them but revert to their home language when negotiating with others in the home corner. Most children listen for short periods of time when required, understanding and responding to simple instructions. Bilingual language support is provided by the nursery nurses, whose expertise is invaluable in translating spoken English into children's mother tongue in situations where they are unable to understand. An example of this in the nursery is when they explain the meaning of windscreen wipers in the song *Wheels on the bus*.

66 In the reception classes children explore new words to name objects and are encouraged to describe the properties of objects such as a brick. However, when asked by the teacher, only one child was able to name a brick. Children are taught to say 'please' and 'thank you' and answer 'yes' in response to the teacher when the register is called.

67 More able reception children recognise the letter 'o' understanding that it is the initial sound of 'orange' and 'octopus', and can link sounds to letters of the alphabet. In planned activities children use a pencil to practise letters and begin to form them correctly. Some children in the foundation stage show an interest in books, look at the illustrations and listen and join in with stories, in both small and large groups. Teaching in the nursery involves fun and anticipation as children enjoy stories from the 'story box', including books about 'Spot', with children taking particular interest in the colourful 'flap' pictures. Reception children share *Cats sleep anywhere*, in a small group when read to by an adult in the book corner, concentrating and joining in.

Mathematical development

68 Children make good progress throughout the nursery and reception classes, although many children do not achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Teachers provide a sound base of mathematical knowledge on which to build in Key Stage 1. Older children say and use number names in order, when counting the dinner children. A small number of more able reception children recognise numerals to 10 and some are able to place them in the correct order. Reception children use everyday words to describe position such as 'under the table' and 'in front of the table', while other children demonstrate the action.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69 Children enter the nursery class with a basic knowledge of their own home and family and leave the reception class with levels below those expected nationally. They build on this early knowledge to help them understand more about the place where they live and what has happened to them since they were babies. This is extended in the reception class when looking at 'ourselves'. Sound teaching throughout the foundation stage ensures that every opportunity is used to develop children's language as they are encouraged to draw and describe their families in planned activities.

70 The children use the computer with confidence when supported by an adult and some can control the mouse in their work. Children in both years use construction apparatus to build and construct, but many children need encouragement and guidance to complete a model. Children are made aware of other customs and beliefs through the celebration of Christmas, Easter, Divali and Eid, including individual birthday celebrations.

Physical development

71 The outdoor nursery area provides children with valuable climbing and balancing activities which contribute to them reaching the expected levels in physical development at the end of the foundation stage. The sound quality of the teaching builds on this experience as the children in the reception classes use the hall apparatus to extend their physical skills. They develop an awareness of the needs of others and the space around them in their use of small and large equipment. Children in the reception class have no access to a planned outdoor area where they can move with confidence, imagination and safety. Teachers teach skills such as cutting, using scissors to help children gain safe control of these finer movements.

Creative development

72 Starting from a low base children do not meet the expected level by the end of the reception year, although good progress is made. Sound teaching provides experiences such as cutting and sticking and painting throughout the foundation stage. In the nursery, children are beginning to recognise different colours and enjoy marble painting, printing and paper collage. Children are encouraged to describe the textures of materials and make an octopus in a planned activity supervised by a nursery nurse. In a large group children have difficulty in repeating patterns in sound but they are able to sing songs from memory such as *Happy Birthday*. Adults and parents take part in role-play in the nursery, which is beneficial to the settling-in of newly arrived children. In the reception classes the home corner is in constant use.

ENGLISH

73 There has been a considerable improvement in attainment in English since the previous inspection. In the national tests in 2000 for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, 73% reached at least the expected level 2 in reading, a rise of 9% on the 1999 results and in writing 66% reached this level, a rise of 13%. In the tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, 72% reached at least the expected level 4, a 14% rise on the previous year. By the age of eleven, attainment in English is approaching that of children of a similar age nationally. Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 2 and this progress is accelerated in year 6 because of the very high quality of the teaching ensuring that the school exceeded its targets for this subject. Inspection findings confirm that although pupils currently entering year 6 show a level of attainment that is below expectation for their age the highly focused and challenging teaching is likely to result in their achieving national averages by the end of the year.

74 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is below national expectations for children of seven. Approximately 98% of the pupils entering the school have English as an additional language and this is impacting on their attainment across the key stage.

75 Standards in spoken English are below expectations at both key stages and this restricts access to the curriculum in other subject areas, particularly at Key Stage 1. Pupils develop listening skills appropriately but they have poor levels of spoken English. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. Skills of spoken

English are developed in class discussions where teachers use questioning to extend pupils' use of English and to introduce new vocabulary. Not enough opportunities are planned into the teaching, however, to allow pupils to practise and consolidate their skills effectively within group tasks or through drama, debate, puppets, or presentations to peers, in all subjects of the curriculum although some good examples of this practice were seen in classes in both key stages. Pupils in Key Stage 1 attempted to describe a chosen disguise to their peers and in another class older pupils interviewed Henry VIII using role-play very effectively to master the correct use of formal language for such an occasion. These opportunities are not, however, consistently developed across the key stages in a planned and structured approach.

76 At the end of Key Stage 2 standards in reading are in line with national averages. Pupils read a suitable range of books and many pupils read independently, with expression and understanding. The introduction of the books associated with the literacy hour is having a significant impact on pupils' interest in reading as they experience a wide range of literature in a variety of forms. Standards in reading are below national averages at the end of Key Stage 1. The school is striving hard to drive standards up through tightly focused support and rigorous monitoring of progress. The literacy hour is having a significant impact on standards. Pupils are making good progress in learning to read through shared and guided reading. By the age of seven many pupils read the words of texts at an appropriate level for their age showing good decoding skills, but even higher attaining pupils have problems understanding and discussing their reading. They pay close attention to print but although they are alert to spelling patterns many are unable to use the structure of sentences to aid them in their reading because of their poor command of English.

77 The school has a very attractive and newly refurbished library and teachers provide a good range of both fiction and non-fiction within classrooms to meet pupils' needs. All classes visit the library regularly where they develop library skills very well in a high quality setting. Pupils are able to borrow from the wide range of books available. Pupils like the books in school and enjoy taking them home to read. Teachers have created attractive book corners in classrooms in Key Stage 1 where pupils enjoy books for themselves in quiet and comfort. All pupils read regularly and frequently to the teacher, and to their parents/carers at home and this is very effective in building confidence and an interest in reading.

78 The literacy hour is having a significant impact on the development of pupils' grammatical knowledge and their understanding of language in Key Stage 2. The school has worked very hard indeed to implement the National Literacy Strategy and has done so very effectively. The highly focused teaching and very hard work of both pupils and teachers has been very effective in raising attainment and pupils now achieve close to the national standard expected for eleven-year-olds by the end of the key stage. The most able pupils have a good understanding of how to write narrative, factual pieces, and poetry. When they enter year 6 many pupils find it difficult to produce a sustained piece of writing with the variety of language and the accuracy expected at this age. At the end of the year, however, there are very few pupils who cannot produce writing with clear sentence structure, good presentation, punctuation and spelling. This represents good progress. The school's introduction of setting and small group work in 'booster' classes is having a marked impact on attainment towards the end of the key stage. Younger pupils, who receive additional literacy support in small groups, make very good progress and enjoy the sessions greatly. They are very proud of their achievements. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for through working within sets. They make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans with skilled direct teaching designed to specifically meet their needs.

79 Attainment in writing is below national expectations for seven-year-olds. The work of many pupils shows evidence of their home language structures and this is impacting adversely on pupils' attainment in English. Pupils use phonic knowledge effectively in their spellings and a few are beginning to use simple punctuation in their sentences. By the end of the key stage a few pupils write simple stories and character profiles displaying a developing use of descriptive language. Pupils make sound progress in writing throughout Key Stage 1. Younger pupils progress from using marks on paper which represent words to the use of complete sentences. As these simple sentences become more complex higher attaining pupils are beginning to use connecting words effectively to join ideas.

80 Pupils are making good progress in their literacy lessons, which are well organised and provide skilled direct teaching. The contribution that other subjects make to literacy is being developed well and the school has recently appointed a co-ordinator specifically to oversee these links. Pupils experience a range of styles and purposes for writing within the literacy hour and these skills are very effectively reinforced and consolidated in, for example, science where written work is well presented using appropriate language and style.

81 No unsatisfactory teaching was seen in English. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is sound. The quality of teaching is consistently good across Key Stage 2 and it is very good in year 6. Teachers use information technology very effectively to support learning in English. Where lessons are most effective teachers plan them very well, give a clear explanation of the ideas being taught, and use a good structure so that pupils may model their work on the strategy given, to meet the targets of the lesson. These lessons are characterised by strong relationships between teacher and pupils ensuring that pupils are valued and that they know very well what is expected of them for both behaviour and attainment. Teachers' subject knowledge is good so that they teach basic skills very clearly and pupils readily learn and understand them. Teachers involve pupils actively in their learning so they have a clear understanding of the focus of the lessons. The system of setting ensures work is very well matched to the needs of the individual pupils with high levels of challenge for the more able ones.

82 The co-ordinator has worked very hard to raise standards with the introduction of the literacy hour and a focus on reading and writing, with clear targets set for pupils in order that they may begin to take responsibility for their own learning. Assessment in English is thorough and rigorous and the results of national tests are analysed throughout Key Stage 2. This data is used effectively to plan learning and to formulate targets for pupils. Teachers keep detailed records of pupils' progress in reading and writing but there are no effective records for speaking and listening. This means that teaching in this highly important area for pupils who are learning English as an additional language, cannot be targeted to meet needs and progress cannot be effectively monitored. Resources in English are very good with an excellent range of high quality books for use within the literacy hour and for individual reading and home loans. Leadership in the subject is very good. The school is strongly committed to a policy of social and educational inclusion and has high ideals for pupils and their attainment.

MATHEMATICS

83 Standards are below average at the end of both key stages although they are rising. Attainment in national tests at the end of both key stages is below average. The trend in results over the last few years however, shows a consistent rise in standards and at the end of Key Stage 2 the school performs well when compared with similar

schools. The school has set challenging yet realistic targets for further improvements in mathematical performance. The results of the year 2000 national tests show that 74% of pupils at Key Stage 1 reached at least the expected level 2, a rise of 15% over the 1999 results. At the end of Key Stage 2 the test results show that 62% of pupils reached at least the expected level 4, a rise of 5% on the 1999 results.

84 At Key Stage 1 the younger pupils order numbers, use simple addition and some recognise the equivalent values of different coins. The more able add numbers to ten and are beginning to recognise the numbers of the five times table. In year 2, pupils count forwards and backwards in fives and tens and are beginning to double numbers below ten. Higher attaining pupils use different strategies to add and subtract with the help of a number square. Progress at this stage is inhibited to some extent by language difficulties as English is the second language for the majority. This is apparent when pupils struggle to explain their mental strategies and show confusion over mathematical terms. The presence of bilingual support teachers is of great benefit in this respect but they are insufficient in number. The setting of pupils by attainment provides a structure for focusing tasks so that all abilities including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

85 At Key Stage 2 the pupils in year 3 increase their learning of mathematical language and many understand place value. They count in tens, add 2 digit numbers and are improving in their ability to explain their work. By year 4 pupils extend their work in addition and subtraction and classify a variety of mathematical shapes by correctly identifying right angles. Higher up the school the pupils investigate successfully the number patterns within the nine times table and learn to apply this knowledge and to solve problems. At the end of the key stage pupils use the four operations of number to solve real life problems. Many understand and use appropriate mathematical terms and investigate the conversion of fractions to decimals using calculators. Progress is at first gradual but accelerates towards the end of the key stage and is therefore good overall. This is due to the good quality of teaching and the increasing facility with language as demonstrated by the older pupils. The setting policy continues to ensure that pupils of all abilities including high attaining pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress.

86 Since the time of the last inspection, the school has adopted the National Numeracy Strategy as its scheme of work for mathematics. This has provided a structure that is helping teachers to plan, deliver and assess their work more consistently. It has also ensured that appropriate time is given to practical work and the development of pupils' mental agility. In order to increase awareness of the strategy, parents are informed of what their children are expected to learn. This effective practice is supported by consultation evenings and classroom observations. A further link between school and home is the establishment of a homework policy though this is inconsistently applied and requires further development.

87 Teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall. In the single lesson when it was unsatisfactory, this was mainly due to inexperience. The pace of learning is too slow and the tasks are not well matched to the pupils' needs so that they lose concentration. At Key Stage 2 the teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory and is very good at times in years 5 and 6. Teaching is good when the lesson objectives are clearly explained and the practical work of the lesson is closely matched to those objectives and the ability of the pupils. The understanding that pupils acquire from such lessons is consolidated effectively when teachers allow time for them to explain their mental processes. Good class management is an essential component of effective teaching and it is achieved because teachers know the abilities and attitudes of individuals within the class. This knowledge promotes a productive working

atmosphere through the different phases of the lesson leading to the efficient use of time and enables teachers to support and monitor progress.

88 The mathematics curriculum is well managed by the co-ordinator who has established the National Numeracy Strategy and ensured that it is working consistently across both key stages. Class teachers carry out assessment to identify needs, set targets for future planning and monitor objectives and attitudes. These systems are effective and contribute to the continuing improvement in performance in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. The establishment of a new computer suite enables whole classes to benefit from planned opportunities to use information technology. In year 3, pupils use Logo commands to reinforce their understanding of angles and direction and in year 5, pupils learn to exploit the power of a spreadsheet to solve problems. A teacher has responsibility for ensuring that numeracy is promoted within other aspects of the curriculum. This is beginning to develop and there is evidence of graphs and charts in science, measuring in design and technology and the use of co-ordinates in geography.

SCIENCE

89 Standards in science have improved significantly, particularly in Key Stage 2, because of good quality planning and the firm structure that has been developed since the last inspection. The dramatic improvement is a real strength of the school. The quality of assessment procedures introduced recently is already having a strong impact on pupils' achievement. The setting arrangements across the junior department contribute greatly to the school's success in raising standards for all pupils, but particularly for the most able and those with special educational needs. Teachers use assessment information to set specific learning targets for individual pupils and groups, and adjust their teaching plans according to their findings. Most lessons have a strong emphasis on practical investigations, and although a very few planned activities are not appropriate, the commitment to scientific enquiry is a key feature in the school's recent success.

90 Teacher assessments carried out in 2000 on pupils in Key Stage 1 indicate that 78% of pupils reached the expected level 2. This is still below average against national figures, but standards have been rising markedly over the past four years. When compared with similar schools, standards at Key Stage 1 are much above average.

91 In national tests for Key Stage 2 carried out in 2000, 87% of pupils reached the expected level 4 or above, a rise of 10% on the school's level for 1999. The trend in improvement over the past four years has been above average against national figures. Pupils' results last year were well above average in comparison with pupils from similar schools.

92 Observations made during the inspection indicate that pupils currently in year 2 are attaining standards that match national expectations for pupils of their age and pupils in year 6 exceed them. In year 6 pupils understand the need to gather evidence to support their ideas, and overall can work well in groups to carry out and record investigations such as the variations in materials when testing for translucency. Pupils in the top set know how to ensure that a test is fair and can make and explain predictions about the outcomes of their experiments. They have a good grasp of the process of scientific enquiry, using different recording methods including the computer. The framework they work to is clearly identified for each child, and this is having a strong impact on the quality of their learning, not least in the development of scientific language. There is evidence in the work of last year's pupils that numeracy and literacy skills are appropriately used in science as when, for example, pupils write up

and evaluate their investigations and chart their conclusions in graphs or tables. Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress. Pupils currently in year 2 demonstrate appropriate knowledge about pushing and pulling objects, and make charts to record their observations and comparisons using writing and spelling skills when labelling their posters. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress.

93 Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make good progress in science in both key stages. They are effectively supported by trained classroom assistants who help them with experiments or computer tasks and by translating key words.

94 Teaching in science is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Planning documents provide focused and comprehensive guidance for teachers on all aspects of the science curriculum. The good quality of science education in the school reflects teachers' sound understanding of the subject, which generally enables pupils to grasp key concepts through appropriately organised and targeted practical sessions. Teachers are skilled in asking questions that enable pupils to talk about their learning in previous science lessons. On occasions, however, teachers lose sight of the major idea when planning activities for investigations, as occurred when pupils were finding ways to restrict sound and when younger pupils were sorting photographs of moving fairground rides. This limits the opportunity for pupils to make the best use of the activities. In year 6, where pupils make the most rapid progress, girls sometimes dominate the investigative activities while the boys take a less active role.

95 Although there is no science co-ordinator at present, the system developed in previous years is effective and robust. Resources are of good quality, very well organised and easily accessible to all staff. Assessment procedures are firmly established, and clear records are kept of pupils' knowledge and progress.

ART AND DESIGN

96 Art and design has had a lower profile over recent years because of the school's focus on literacy and numeracy. It has not therefore been possible to maintain the high standards reported at the time of the previous inspection though standards are currently similar to those of seven and eleven-year-olds in other schools. Pupils' achievements, including those with special educational needs, are satisfactory throughout the school but progress is not consistent. No lessons in art and design were seen in Key Stage 1 during the inspection.

97 Key Stage 2 pupils study different drawing techniques, for example, experimenting with line and shade in pencil and then comparing this with the techniques required for charcoal and pastels. Pupils in year 4 show a sound awareness of basic design skills as they design their own motifs for historical costumes. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use their sketchbooks effectively to develop ideas and designs.

98 In their study of the work of famous artists, pupils in Key Stage 2 have examined the work of Léger, Picasso, and Cezanne and created images of their own to recreate the desired effect, and then outlined their figures in black after the style of the artist where appropriate. Pupils in year 4 study the work of a range of artists in their work on flower pictures and begin their own pictures from observational drawings using watercolour. Older pupils at the end of the key stage study the designs of William Morris and use small examples of William Morris designs to extrapolate to large pictures of their own.

99 Pupils in Key Stage 1 model with clay and have made animals with decoration to their own design. Year 2 pupils have benefited greatly from their work in an art workshop where they produced an imaginative patchwork quilt using skills of batik, sewing, and collage to interpret a motif of fruits. By year 6 pupils use a range of fabrics and materials to make puppets. Information technology is used very effectively in the subject across both key stages.

100 Pupils' response to lessons is good. They enjoy art and are interested and involved. Pupils listen carefully, answer questions appropriately, and settle well to the tasks set. Pupils are able to concentrate for satisfactory amounts of time and talk enthusiastically about what they have learned.

101 Throughout the school, displays of paintings and printings enhance the corridors and classrooms and demonstrate the satisfactory progress that pupils, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language are making. The teaching of art is satisfactory overall, and teachers demonstrate sound subject knowledge, although some members of staff are not as confident as others. This lack of confidence and expertise results in an unsystematic approach to the teaching of skills and progress across year groups is consequently inconsistent. Lessons are appropriately resourced but assessment opportunities are not identified. Pupils' learning is enhanced by visits to The Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery and working alongside a visiting artist.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102 There were no lessons seen in design and technology in either key stage during the inspection, but opportunities were taken to talk with pupils, to look at displays around the school and at teachers' planning. This indicates that attainment in both key stages matches national expectations, although pupils have more experience in making than in design skills. Progress for all pupils in both key stages is satisfactory overall despite a limited curriculum. Some design and technology is taught through other subjects, particularly art, with some pleasing results in pupils' work. Opportunities to evaluate and improve their work are limited, however, as designs are very prescriptive, giving pupils too little experience in choosing their own materials or deciding measurements or methods of construction. The apparent decline since the last inspection reflects the school's commitment to the introduction of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies which has reduced the time available for teaching design and technology. However, literacy and numeracy skills are appropriately used in design and technology as when, for example, pupils measure materials and record their activities.

103 Pupils learn to use different joining techniques as they make frames and hinges for cardboard houses. These skills are built on in year 6 when pupils make a market stall, developing also the skills in measuring, marking, cutting and folding that were explored in year 4 when making a Tudor house. Pupils in that year group draw plans for their building, labelling sketches and identifying the tools and equipment they will be using. Pupils take great pride in talking about their achievements and eagerly look forward to making the objects they see displayed around the school. Pupils' work is valued highly and well displayed around the school.

104 The co-ordinator has been in post for a very short time, and there is a lack of expertise in the subject across the school. The school continues to use the previous scheme of work which has separate plans for each year group. These offer appropriate tasks generally, but there is little coherence and limited continuity from year to year. Resources are inadequate at present. New stock is ordered as it is

required. There are no systems in place for assessing pupils' progress or recording their experiences.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

105 It was only possible to observe two geography lessons and three history lessons during the period of the inspection. Judgements are based on the scrutiny of work, planning and discussions with pupils and teachers, particularly at Key Stage 1, where no lessons were seen. Standards in history and geography are below expectations at seven and in line in both subjects by eleven. This shows a drop in standards at Key Stage 1 since the last report and reflects the lack of consistency in the planning for these pupils in both subjects. The new subject co-ordinators confirm that the progress in geography and history has been inconsistent due to the topic-based teaching and lack of structure in the schemes of work, particularly in Key Stage 1. This means that pupils have not consistently acquired the appropriate geographical and historical skills, knowledge and understanding. Insufficient support for younger children's spoken English slows progress in Key Stage 1, as pupils lack the understanding of historical and geographical vocabulary necessary at an early stage. Good emphasis is placed on literacy skills in Key Stage 2, particularly in the development of research skills.

106 Pupils in year 3 who have just completed Key Stage 1 have some understanding of their local area in both its historical and geographical features. They are able to describe the local area in which they live in simple terms, but are unable to describe what things used to be like. Pupils are unable to name any famous people in history but suggest the use of books and the computer to find out historical facts. In their geography studies pupils visit places such as the Shire Horse Centre and Hatton Farm in order to widen their experiences.

107 Pupils in year 6 have a satisfactory understanding of both history and geography. They experience a wide range of visits in both subjects and share information about the dangers of pollution and ways to improve the environment. They are aware of many aspects of history by the age of eleven. They describe the plague as an event in history and display a good knowledge of the Victorian period. Pupils explain in good detail terms such as 'settlement' and 'invasion' and suggest maps, museums and building tools as ways to find out about the past. Information and communication technology is well integrated in the geography and history curriculum.

108 As no lessons were seen in Key Stage 1, it is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. The quality of teaching in geography and history at Key Stage 2 is good. Teachers show good subject knowledge, particularly in relation to the Ancient Greeks, the Olympic Games and geographical knowledge about rivers. They are clear about what they want the pupils to learn and share this with them. They give clear instructions and expect pupils to meet high standards. Teachers continuously pose challenging questions that help to develop pupils' thinking and understanding. Pupils have very good relationships, both with other pupils and with their teachers. Classroom assistants are used well to support the lower attaining pupils and those who need support with English.

109 The long-term plans for both history and geography have been revised, ensuring that both subjects are more frequently and consistently taught, throughout the school. The new schemes of work are to be examined by all teachers and any necessary alterations made. Pupils are already benefiting from the introduction of the weekly ten minute geography topic, 'What's in the news?' focusing on aspects of the news in a particular part of the world. This involves geography, history and literacy as

a report of the event is read in the daily newspaper. The new schemes of work provide an improved structure for Key Stage 1 and an appropriate balance of activities to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding throughout the school.

110 There has been an improvement in the resources for both subjects since the previous inspection and co-ordinators intend to improve these still further. At the present time there are insufficient atlases for pupils to have these readily available in classes. Book and artefact loans extend the resources for history and co-ordinators use visits and visitors to enliven their subjects.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

111 Standards in information and communication technology at Key Stage 1 are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils make good progress. The younger pupils gain experience with the computer keyboard by typing their names and matching words to pictures. They experiment with brush and line using a graphics package and develop the concept of symmetry by designing a Christmas tree. They use a tape recorder to record sounds and learn how to find information. In year 2 the pupils consolidate and extend their keyboard skills in order to amend and improve their sentences. They learn the commands for direction and distance and use a sequence of instructions to control a programmable toy.

112 Standards at Key Stage 2 are above average. Pupils continue to make good progress. In year 3 pupils control a screen pointer through a maze using a sequence of commands that rely on their understanding of right angle turns and judgement of distance. As part of their literacy studies, pupils from year 4 complete sentences and combine text with pictures to communicate information about life in Tudor times. As part of the numeracy studies, higher attaining pupils from year 5 use their skills in data handling to enter information and compare the speed of calculation with pencil and paper methods. In year 6 pupils search through files that they used in previous years, make selections and transfer them to another application. They understand what they have achieved and some pupils can evaluate these procedures and discuss the value of information technology compared with more traditional methods of working.

113 Since the time of the last inspection the school has established a new computer suite that consists of fifteen computers some of which have Internet connections. Also new computers together with older machines have increased the provision in the rest of the school to two computers for each classroom. This system enables whole classes at a time to develop their skills in information and communication technology and to consolidate them back in the classroom. Although it is still a new resource, the computer suite is used to very good effect and the rate at which pupils learn and develop new skills has increased considerably. The use of classroom computers to consolidate learning in information technology is less well developed.

114 The quality of teaching at both key stages is good and at times very good. At present this is carried out by the co-ordinator for information and communication technology who shares the planning with his colleagues and delivers the lessons with their support. This is an effective system and has the advantage of exposing both pupils and teachers to his expertise while ensuring continuity of use for the new computer suite. In good lessons the teaching is technically competent because the teacher is aware of what the computer software can offer and is able to demonstrate confidently. The interest of the pupils is sustained and they in turn are confident to experiment. As the teacher is aware of the pupils' prior knowledge he is able to give continuity to their learning in other subjects. In this way the teaching of Greek myths in

history is illuminated by their attempts on the computer to guide Theseus to the Minotaur. At another time, using the power of a spreadsheet extends the problem solving skills of pupils who had studied patterns in the nine times table earlier in the week. Pupils are well managed in the computer suite and following an introductory demonstration they work at their tasks in pre-selected pairs. Boys often work alongside girls and high attaining pupils are sometimes paired with the less able. This system works successfully and ensures that all pupils including the more able and those with special educational needs, have equal access to information technology. In the majority of cases, pupils work collaboratively and teachers intervene if one pupil is too dominant at the computer.

115 The co-ordinator for information and communication technology has overseen the establishment of the new computer suite and has been instrumental in ensuring that the system is meeting the needs of pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum. In this respect all aspects of the curriculum are being delivered and the school is already good at supporting the other subject areas through information technology. The scheme of work shows clearly how information technology is taught as a discrete subject and how it relates to planning in other subjects. A recording system effectively tracks the stages of development that pupils experience as they move through the school but has not yet evolved into a record of individual capability in information technology.

116 The co-ordinator is enthusiastic in promoting his subject by displaying newspaper articles on new technology. He organises a lunchtime club during which pupils from year 6 can access the Internet and there is evidence of the effective use of a digital camera. There are plans for parental access to the computer suite and links with the community by installing on the computer photographs and audio files of the memories of local residents.

MUSIC

117 Attainment in music is below national expectations for pupils at the age of both seven and eleven. Standards are not therefore as high as they were at the time of the previous inspection, when they were judged to be broadly in line with expectations. In the three class lessons seen, pupils were working at an appropriate standard, although the singing of older pupils in the hall, while enthusiastic, lacked tone and phrasing.

118 Discussion with pupils in both year 3 and year 6 shows considerable gaps in both knowledge and understanding. The younger pupils are unable to name musical instruments and have had very limited opportunities to compose and record their own music, either as individuals or in groups. In lessons they are able to clap or beat out the rhythm of their name, but lack the musical vocabulary to describe the sounds they make.

119 The oldest pupils have no knowledge of musical terms such as 'pitch', 'tempo' or 'dynamics'. They have played mainly untuned percussion instruments. They cannot remember composing music, either by themselves or with others, and are unable to suggest ways of recording music so someone else could play it. They have sung in parts in song practice, but are unable to name any composers or pieces of music they have heard.

120 All pupils have the chance to listen to music, both in class lessons and some assemblies, but older pupils, for example, are unaware of the term 'classical music', despite sessions with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. Good use is made

of information and communication technology, and pupils in different year groups use programs to write and play back tunes on the computers.

121 The limited amount of teaching seen was always satisfactory and in one instance good. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, who enjoy music.

122 The subject has been without a co-ordinator for almost two years, and this and the school's successful focus on literacy and numeracy go some way towards explaining the regression in the subject. A new co-ordinator has been appointed, and a comprehensive scheme of work is now in place. The school now needs to see that this is implemented throughout both key stages in order to ensure that all pupils have access to the full curriculum for music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123 Only four physical education lessons, all of them gymnastics, were observed during the inspection and the timetable made it impossible to see year 6 at work. On the evidence seen standards are average at both key stages. Pupils in year 2 use the large apparatus sensibly and appropriately. They climb confidently and competently with due regard to their own safety and to that of others and jump off the apparatus landing smartly and safely. They perform forward rolls after a fashion with the highest attaining pupils proving quite adept and agile while the lower attaining pupils show less control sometimes ending up sideways. They all make satisfactory progress, improving the quality and control of their movements as the lesson progresses.

124 Younger pupils at Key Stage 2 put together short sequences of movements including jumps, rolls and balances and make satisfactory progress in improving the quality of their routine throughout the lesson. Older pupils at Key Stage 2 show good skill and control in simple half and full turn jumps following the teacher's very clear instructions and demonstration. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. For example they show improvements in the quality and control of their jumps and landings over a lesson. However the prescriptive nature of some of the tasks means that some higher attaining pupils are not given challenging enough tasks. Most pupils reach the required standard in swimming before they leave school with several exceeding it.

125 Although teaching is satisfactory at both key stages, the lack of time in lessons because of the number of classes needing the hall for physical education, leads to it being over directed at times with too little scope for all pupils to develop their own ideas and put together sequences they have devised. The strengths of the teaching are the direct instructions in techniques based on planning which says very clearly what pupils will learn in the lesson and the way teachers manage the behaviour of the pupils. The weaknesses include the lack of time pupils have to develop their own ideas and practise skills within lessons and occasionally the pace of the lessons is too slow. Because of the emphasis on direct teaching sometimes too many pupils are waiting too long for their turn on the apparatus. At Key Stage 1 the effective use of classroom support assistants to work with small groups ensures that pupils make satisfactory progress.

126 Standards in physical education have been maintained since the previous inspection when they were reported as in line with expectations. Teaching at that time was said to range from good to unsatisfactory and is now more consistent with no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection. The school continues to provide a broad range of activities in physical education despite the difficulties of having no

grassed area and the pressure upon the hall. However some higher attaining pupils show the potential to achieve rather more than they do now if appropriate time, space and facilities were available to them. This is something the school needs to explore in the light of the proposed developments to enhance the building.

127 Pupils enjoy their physical education lessons. They pay attention to their teachers, follow instructions sensibly and work well together in the fairly confined space of the hall. The constraints of the timetable mean that opportunities for them to take responsibility for their own work are limited but when they are given such responsibility they respond well as a year 2 class demonstrated in sequencing movements on the apparatus.

128 The co-ordinator is new to the post, full of enthusiasm, committed to raising standards and is revising the scheme of work in the light of recent national guidelines. A good range of extra-curricular sporting activities enhances the provision for pupils' physical development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

129 At the time of the last inspection standards of attainment were judged to be broadly in line with those expected nationally (although there are in fact no national standards for this subject). The school recognised that the subject was in need of development. Since then, due to the very high proportion of pupils whose religious beliefs are other than Christian, the school has whole-school determination, allowing it to give equal weight to all faiths, rather than focusing mainly on Christianity.

130 The school still bases its religious education on the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus, which is reflected in the policy and scheme of work. Standards of attainment are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by seven, but in line with it by the age of eleven. Evidence from lessons suggests that this is at least partly due to language difficulties. Virtually all pupils in the school have English as an additional language, and younger pupils in particular lack the vocabulary to discuss ideas and concepts with confidence.

131 It was only possible to see three lessons in the course of the inspection, two of them at Key Stage 1. Teaching is sound throughout, with teachers being careful to match their language and expectations to the pupils' understanding. Relationships between teachers and pupils are friendly and positive. The focus at times is rather more on the moral and social aspects of living, such as caring for animals, with little attempt made to link this to specifically religious concerns.

132 Discussions with pupils in year 3, who have just completed Key Stage 1, indicate that their knowledge and understanding of areas covered by the scheme of work is patchy at best, and in some cases lacking altogether. This is true of all four religions studied, as well as more general ideas such as the symbolism of light and darkness. Despite this pupils are interested and keen to share their ideas.

133 Pupils in year 6 are much better informed, and are often able to discuss religious topics in a thoughtful way, suggesting that as well as being taught about different religious practices they are encouraged to think about values and beliefs. They understand that we celebrate the harvest to thank God for His gifts, and how religion helps you to live your life. They realise, for example, that Mohammed, Guru Nanak and Jesus all taught people to be wary of wealth because of the danger of it leading to greed and selfishness.

134 There is little evidence of the scheme of work making a planned contribution to the development of pupils' spirituality, and in lessons and acts of worship there are too few opportunities for pupils to reflect and meditate in a meaningful way. There is an adequate range of religious artefacts and books, although they are not accessible to pupils.