

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **ST. JOHN'S CE (C) PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Essington, Wolverhampton

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124295

Headteacher: Mr S Ayres

Reporting inspector: Mr G R Alston  
20794

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> September 2000

Inspection number: 224667

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

School category: Voluntary Controlled

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Hobnock Road  
Essington  
Wolverhampton  
Staffordshire

Postcode: WV11 2RF

Telephone number: 01922 476695

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr P Lees

Date of previous inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr G Alston, 20794	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 are pupils taught?
Mr A Smith, 19740	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs A Heakin, 30243	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
		English as an additional language	
		English	
		Religious education	
Mrs J Fisher, 19709	Team inspector	The foundation stage	
		Geography	
		History	
		Music	
Mrs V Brittain, 21893	Team inspector	Science	How well is the school led and managed?
		Information and communication technology	

Mr M Heyes, 30439	Team inspector	Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Mathematics	
		Art and design	
		Design and technology	

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 London WC2B 6SE

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>29</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. John's C E Primary School is an above averaged sized primary school with 405 pupils ranging from 4 – 11 years in age. In the reception classes there are 58 children under the age of six. There are no pupils with parents from another culture, and the number of pupils entitled to free meals is below the national average. The number of pupils identified as having special needs due to learning or behavioural difficulties is below the national average and pupils' attainment on entry is at the expected level. There are three pupils who have a statement of special needs. This is a popular school and is over subscribed in some year groups.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good school. It is effective because staff, pupils and parents enthusiastically contribute to the life of the school. Pupils are well taught and achieve good standards in English, mathematics and science. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher with support from a conscientious deputy head, staff and governors, and as a result it gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The 1999 National test results at the end of Key Stage 2 in mathematics and science are above average and better than other schools with pupils from a similar background. Results in 2000 were better than 1999; there was a significant rise in the numbers of pupils achieving Level 5, particularly in English.
- Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, have a good relationship with them and set interesting and challenging tasks. All staff are very conscientious and successfully provide a happy, caring environment for pupils.
- The headteacher, with the support of a caring staff, provides very good leadership and in consultation with a conscientious governing body ensures that money is used effectively.
- The pupils behave well, form good relationships and try hard with their work.
- Pupils with special needs make good progress; they receive effective help in the classroom.
- The school has very good links with parents and the support parents give pupils at home is a great help to them. Parental support in raising funds is excellent.
- The school provides a stimulating curriculum enriched by visits, visitors and a good range of out of school activities. Very good provision is made to help pupils develop socially and morally.

#### **What could be improved**

- The standard of pupils' handwriting and spelling.
- Assessment and recording procedures in subjects other than English and mathematics.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in November 1996 and has made good progress in its programme of improvement. The school now has effective schemes of work in all subjects providing clear guidance for teachers. There are good assessment procedures in place in English and mathematics enabling teachers to gain a clear picture of what pupils know, understand and can do in these subjects. However, this good practice is not evident in most other subjects and pupils are not regularly assessed, resulting in little recorded evidence of their achievements. Teachers' planning has improved and lesson plans clearly identify what pupils of all abilities are to learn. The school has effective systems to identify pupils with special needs and provision for these pupils is good. Through a planned programme, the school effectively provides opportunities for pupils' spiritual development and there are sufficient opportunities in lessons for pupils to reflect on and discuss their views with others. The school's aims have been revised and there is a clear focus on high standards. All these factors have improved the quality of teaching that in turn has raised standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science. The priorities the school has identified for development, along with its enthusiasm and commitment to higher achievement, give the school a good capacity for further improvement.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	C	B	C	C
mathematics	C	B	B	B
science	B	D	B	B

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

The information shows that results in mathematics and science are above the national average and average in English. Compared with schools, who have pupils from a similar background, results are above average in mathematics and science and average in English. Trends over time show an overall improvement, although results fell in English in 1999 due to a fall in the number of pupils achieving Level 5. However, recent test results show a significant improvement in pupils achieving Level 5, particularly in English. Inspection findings agree with recent test results; pupils achieve well in all three subjects reaching above average standards. The results of the 1999 national tests for 7-year-olds show that results are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Trends over time show results have been consistently above average with a significant rise in 1999. The class of pupils who took the test in 1999 had a greater number of higher attaining pupils in the class than is normal for the school. When the school's results are compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds they are much better. Inspection findings do not totally reflect these results. Pupils achieve well and the proportion of pupils who will reach the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. The impact of the Literacy and Numeracy strategy is helping to raise standards. However, in science, teacher assessments indicated that the number of pupils achieving the nationally expected level was below the national average, with none achieving higher and the school performed well below the average for similar schools. Teacher assessment in 2000 show the number of pupils achieving expected levels has risen but again with no higher Level 3's. Inspection evidence indicates that teachers have been over-cautious when assessing pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and that, overall, pupils are achieving in line with the national average and a few pupils above. In information technology, at the end of both key stages pupils' attainment is above national expectations. In religious education pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages is at the level expected by the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Across the school, pupils achieve well in physical education and art and appropriately in other subjects. This shows that standards have been maintained. There is no significant difference in the progress made by boys and girls. Pupils with special needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment as a result of the good support they receive. The school is achieving high standards and has already met the targets it has set itself in national tests.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are keen to learn. They settle quickly to tasks and concentrate well. They are proud of their school and give of their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour both in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils care for one another, showing respect for adults and other pupils.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good and pupils have a clear sense of responsibility. Relationships are very positive.
Attendance	Attendance is good and pupils enjoy coming to school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	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, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers successfully meet the needs of all pupils. Across the school all of the teaching was at least satisfactory, and 20 per cent was very good or better. Three lessons were judged to be of excellent quality. This shows an improvement since the last inspection when 13 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. Overall, the teaching of English and mathematics is good and the skills of literacy and numeracy are effectively taught. However, not sufficient focus is given to teaching handwriting and the teaching of spelling is not totally effective. The school has identified spelling as a priority and has recently introduced a programme to address this. Pupils are well motivated by the challenging tasks teachers prepare. Teachers establish a good relationship with their pupils and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work output. Pupils respond very positively and try hard to reach the high standards they are set. The good teaching is instrumental in helping pupils make good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Pupils follow a rich curriculum that meets their needs well. There is a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy with appropriate opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. A good range of out of school activities, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision; work is planned to meet needs. Effective support helps pupils to achieve the targets set in the areas highlighted in their education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils gain a very clear understanding of their moral and social responsibilities from staffs' good role models and clear codes of behaviour. Learning opportunities for pupils' personal development are appropriate. Good examples were seen of pupils working together and organising themselves in English, art or when working on the computer.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a secure, caring environment. Teachers know their pupils well, and good assessment in English and mathematics helps teachers build on pupils' past learning. In most other subjects pupils are not regularly assessed, resulting in little recorded evidence of their achievements.

Parents support the school very well, both in raising funds and by helping pupils at home with their work. The school tries hard and successfully keeps parents informed about the work of the school and of their children's progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and a clear sense of direction. There is a good team approach in decision making. Coordinators effectively manage their subjects. The teaching is monitored carefully.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive and carry out their duties conscientiously. They successfully monitor and evaluate the work of the school. Items are missing from the governors' annual report to parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school effectively evaluates its performance. Where areas have been identified the school considers and implements ways to improve them.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses the money it receives well and deploys its resources effectively. In view of the above average standards achieved, the average income, effective teaching, and the good progress made by pupils who have average attainment on entry, the school gives good value for money.

The school considers carefully how it can get best value in purchasing equipment and services.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The quality of teaching and the behaviour of pupils.</li> <li>The progress pupils make and the standards they achieve.</li> <li>The management and leadership of the school.</li> <li>The information the school provides.</li> <li>The attitudes and values the school promotes.</li> <li>The amount of homework pupils receive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None identified at a significant level of parental concern.</li> </ul>

From the responses made in the questionnaire and from the meeting with inspectors the vast majority of parents were pleased with all aspects of the school. Inspectors' judgements support these positive views. The governors' are responsible for drawing up an action plan that will be circulated to parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. In the 1999 national tests the proportion of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 reaching the expected level (Level 2) was well above the national average in reading and writing and close to the national average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 3) was well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared with schools with pupils of a similar background the school's results were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Although results have fluctuated slightly over the past three years, they have been consistently above the national average with a significant rise in 1999. The class of pupils who took the test in 1999 had a greater number of higher attaining pupils in the class than is normal for the school. In science, teacher assessments indicated the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 2) and the higher level (Level 3) was below the national average. Teacher assessment in 2000 show the number of pupils achieving expected levels had risen to around the national average but again with no higher Level 3's. Inspection evidence indicates that teachers have been over-cautious when assessing pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and that, overall, pupils are achieving in line with the national average and a few pupils above.
2. At the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 4) was close to the national average in English and well above in mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 5) was below the national average in English, close to the national average in mathematics and above in science. When compared with schools that have pupils with similar backgrounds, results in mathematics and science are above average and average in English. Trends over the past three years show a gradual rise, except in English in 1999. This reflects the low numbers of pupils who achieved Level 5 in English. The school identified the number of pupils attaining Level 5 in English as an area for development and as a result of appropriate target setting and additional literacy support there has been a significant improvement in the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5. Most recent test results are significantly better with 53 per cent of pupils achieving Level 5 in English in 2000. The numbers of pupils achieving Level 5 in mathematics and science has also significantly improved in 2000.
3. Assessments of children on entry to the school show that most children under five enter school with speaking and listening skills, number and personal and social skills at the expected level for children of this age. They achieve well in all areas of learning and the good learning environment seen in the foundation stage makes it likely that by the time they are ready to start Year 1, almost all of the children will exceed the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy development, mathematical and physical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and in personal, social, and emotional development. Children are confident and articulate in talking, and enjoy listening to stories. In reading, they are familiar with letters and their sounds, and can compose simple sentences in their writing. In mathematics, they can understand number values and recognise numerals to 20. They share equipment well and are beginning to work collaboratively. They are developing good attitudes to learning, sustain concentration, persevere with their work and show some independence.

4. In English, in the work seen, pupils' attainment by the end of both key stages is above average. Pupils achieve well and progress is good in reading, writing and speaking and listening. By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment is above average in reading and writing and average in speaking and listening. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen carefully, and speak confidently when making responses. By the end of Key Stage 2, they contribute appropriately to class discussions and are able to explain clearly what they have learnt. Pupils' skills in recounting, explaining or answering questions at length are sound. In reading, all pupils show a developing enthusiasm for books and display a good range of strategies for becoming independent readers. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils can successfully read from a range of texts. When reading aloud many use good expression and demonstrate a secure understanding of what they have read. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have appropriate library skills, and can use scanning and skimming skills successfully to find information. In writing, by the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils can express their ideas clearly. Pupils' use of grammar and punctuation is good. However, handwriting is not always clear or well formed, very few pupils use a cursive style and pupils' skills in spelling do not match their other writing skills. There are sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing skills in other subjects. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils can write for different purposes, producing interesting, lively accounts. The use of grammar and punctuation is good but pupils' spelling skills are not so strong. The coordinator has identified spelling as an area for development and has introduced a comprehensive programme to improve this. Written work is not well presented and handwriting is not consistently accurate and fluent in most of work. There are many examples of extended writing.
5. In mathematics, pupils' attainment is above average by the end both key stages. Pupils in both key stages make good progress. Pupils' mental skills are particularly strong and pupils use these skills well in problem solving. In Key Stage 1, pupils are competent in the addition of two digit numbers and the use of correct mathematical language. They have a good understanding of the place value of tens and units and can competently name three-figure numbers. By the end of Key Stage 1, good mental skills are evident and higher attaining pupils can explain their strategies. Most pupils understand money and can make accurate calculations using halves and quarters. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are confident with mental recall of their tables and can add, subtract, multiply and divide large numbers accurately. Most pupils are developing their own strategies for solving problems and can explain their reasoning. All pupils are able to gather and interpret information from graphs and charts and offer simple explanations. Pupils' knowledge of percentages, shape, and symmetry is good. Opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical knowledge in everyday practical situations are good.
6. In science, pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 is average and above average by the end of Key Stage 2. Overall, their progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are developing a good scientific approach and exhibit sound skills in observation, sorting and classifying. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to recognise the need for a fair test, plan and carry out their own experiments and select relevant equipment. Pupils have a well-developed science vocabulary and good investigative skill. They are confident in planning fair tests and understand which variables should be controlled or changed. They have a good knowledge of the natural world, materials and their properties and the physical world.

7. In information and communications technology pupils achieve well and their attainment is above national expectations by the end of both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils use a computer confidently and understand the basic functions of the keyboard and a mouse. Pupils can use a range of programs and program a 'floor robot'. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good facility with desktop publishing and creating a spreadsheet. They have good skills in word processing, and can save their own work, find information on the CD ROM and use icons and menus. They can use the Internet and download the information they require.
8. By the end of both key stages pupils achieve appropriately in religious education and standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils, including those with special needs, make satisfactory progress. Pupils have a wide knowledge of Christianity and a satisfactory knowledge of other religions, such as Judaism and Hinduism. They can make comparisons between the different religions and they can discuss similarities and differences. Their opinions show respect, interest and thoughtfulness.
9. At the end of both key stages, the standard of pupils' work is at the level expected for their age in geography, history, music and design and technology and above in art and physical education. Pupils achieve well in art and physical education and appropriately in other subjects. In lessons progress is always at least satisfactory, and in about 75 per cent of lessons it is good in both key stages. Over time, pupils make good progress in art, and physical education, and sound progress in design and technology, geography, history, and music. Pupils display satisfactory creative skills developed through art, music and design and technology. There is no significant difference in the progress made by boys and girls.
10. In both key stages there are sufficient opportunities for pupils to enhance their writing and reading skills in other subjects. In geography, history, science and religious education pupils write at length, for example, in Year 5 about the state of the local pond, in Year 6 about Tudors. Across the school there are appropriate opportunities for reading for information. The learning in many subjects is enhanced by opportunities to use research skills; for example, in history and geography. Pupils' numeracy skills are used effectively to classify, compare and measure in several subjects; for example, in art, design and technology, geography, information technology and science. The school has already met the targets it has set itself for literacy and numeracy.
11. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. This is because tasks in the classroom are planned effectively by the teacher to meet their needs and the classroom assistant provides good support. The quality of individual education plans is good. They are compiled mainly by the coordinator following discussion with class teachers, support assistants and outside agencies. Learning targets set are, in the main, detailed, specific and achievable in the short term. The individual plans are reviewed regularly and targets modified according to pupil performance. Pupils are well supported in the classroom by non-teaching support staff and by the coordinator.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

12. The previous report commented that pupils' attitudes to learning were satisfactory or better, most pupils were well behaved, concentration was good and pupils showed initiative and responsibility. However, there was a small number of pupils who deliberately took no part in the lessons and distracted other pupils. The school has improved on the positive aspects and has worked well at improving pupil behaviour. Although there were occasional instances when pupils misbehaved they were dealt with effectively by staff and did not affect the quality of learning.
13. Very good attitudes to learning are now exhibited by pupils. They settle very quickly into the school's positive routines and establish a very clear approach to learning from reception class upwards. In both the key stages pupils enjoy the school environment, are keen to learn and work hard. Pupils are very well motivated and responsive to the positive praise and encouragement effectively offered by all staff and to the quality of teaching. In a few isolated cases, a small number of pupils found difficulty in sustaining their attention and motivation. These instances happened despite the good quality of teaching that was going on. Pupils enjoy showing and discussing their work to adults as well as each other. Pupils who have special educational needs have positive attitudes to school and are very well integrated into the school community. They relate well to adults and as a consequence gain in confidence and make good progress.
14. Pupils' behaviour is good. During the inspection pupils were seen to behave well and they quickly settled to their tasks with positive effort. They show genuine concern for other pupils. For example, at lunch and break times the pupils relate to one another in a thoughtful manner, recognising the advantages of the playground rules for themselves and for the benefit of others. There was no aggressive behaviour or bullying observed and in conversations with pupils they expressed no concerns. They felt fully aware of what to do if they should feel threatened, and would go straight to a member of staff and inform them. There have been no exclusions from the school in recent years. Pupils accept, and respond well, to the school's positive behaviour policy. The policy is known and followed by all school staff in order to maintain the very positive and caring environment, which exists.
15. The personal development of pupils is very good throughout the school. Pupils are very eager to accept responsibilities, acting as classroom monitors, helping staff and generally tidying their own desk areas and classrooms. The school is very tidy and no litter was evident; this is partly due to the pupils' respect and care for the school. They collect litter during break times and place in the bins provided. Older pupils control entrance doors at breaks, set up, operate and remove the equipment during assemblies such as overhead projectors. Relationships are very good between all adults and pupils as well as between the pupils themselves. For example, in addition to the teaching staff at lunch times there is a very caring and knowing support provided by lunchtime personnel. This enhances the relationships between pupils and teachers in a positive and respectful manner.
16. Attendance is above the national average. Authorised and unauthorised absences are below the national average. Pupils are eager to come to school, with several arriving quite early. The very good quality of attitudes, good behaviour, very good personal development and relationships across the whole school and good attendance enhances the education the school offers.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. In the previous inspection the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in 13 per cent of the lessons seen. Unsatisfactory teaching was linked to a lack of schemes of work and work not sufficiently well matched to pupils' needs. Overall, the quality of teaching has improved and no examples of unsatisfactory teaching were seen. The amount of teaching judged to be good or very good has also increased. A number of factors have contributed to the improvement in the overall quality of teaching:
  - a raising of teachers' expectations through target setting;
  - the improvement of teachers' short term planning;
  - the development of appropriate schemes of work for all subjects;
  - good assessment procedures in English and mathematics.
18. There have been a number of teaching staff changes bringing new ideas into the school and staff training has been beneficial in improving the teaching of English, mathematics and information and communications technology. Overall, pupils' numeracy and literacy skills are taught well. However, although pupils are taught the sounds of letters this is not always transferred into their written work resulting in spelling errors. Similarly the teaching of handwriting is not sufficiently well focused and as a result the quality of pupils' handwriting is below the level of their other literacy skills. Reading skills are taught well and in all classes the opportunities pupils have to use and develop their writing and reading skills in other subjects as well as English are sufficient. In mathematics, mental strategies are taught effectively and teachers provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to use and apply their knowledge in practical situations in mathematics lessons and in other subjects. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers successfully meet the needs of all pupils. Across the school the teaching was at least satisfactory in all of the lessons seen, and in 23 per cent of lessons it was very good or better. Three lessons were judged to be of excellent quality.
19. Overall, the teaching for under-fives is good. In the lessons seen all the teaching was at least good and in 30 per cent of lessons it was very good. Teachers' planning is carefully based on the early learning goals for children of this age. Relationships are very good and the teacher has a good understanding of the needs of young children in these areas. The nursery nurses and the teacher cooperate and work well together, planning suitable activities to build the children's confidence and skills including extension work for higher attaining pupils. In a very good language lesson aimed at increasing children's understanding of the format of a book, the teacher interacted well with the children inspiring them to contribute enthusiastically to the discussion. In a mathematics lesson, good informal assessment took place leading to each successive step building effectively on children's past knowledge; a strength was the way the teacher adapted the activities according to how well the children achieved, eventually leading all children successfully completing the task. The lesson was well organised to encourage children's independence and initiative in learning.
20. In Key Stage 1 the teaching is good. In the lessons seen, 66 percent of the teaching was of good quality and in five per cent it was very good. Where teaching is of high quality, careful preparation provides a good range of resources to support pupils' learning and pupils are motivated well by praise and encouragement. The teacher has high expectations of pupils and they respond enthusiastically. Lessons are well planned and organised, providing pupils with challenging tasks. An example of very good teaching was in a Year 1 mathematics lesson when pupils explored place value and ordering of numbers to 20. The pupils responded enthusiastically to a large floor number ladder the teacher had created and concentrated hard. As a result they

enjoyed the activity and reached a good understanding of place value and number to 20. Questioning was used effectively to promote and assess understanding and the teacher gave immediate extension or reinforcement as the needs arose. In a good Year 2 literacy lesson as pupils reflected on the story of 'Come away from the water Shirley' the teacher used perceptive questions that focused pupils on the task and valued their contributions to the discussion. The lesson provided pupils with the opportunity to read as if they were the characters in the story and recall their own experiences in relation to the story. In the literacy and numeracy sessions, the staff have established good classroom routines for pupils and there is an industrious working atmosphere. When nursery nurses or other helpers are present they are used purposefully and provide good support for pupils for example, in a class shared writing session the helper provided good support to lower attaining pupils with their spellings.

21. In Key Stage 2, the teaching is good. In the lessons seen the quality of teaching was good in 50 per cent of lessons and very good in 18 per cent. Three lessons were judged to be excellent. The best lessons are well planned, cater for the needs of all pupils, have a clear purpose, include challenging activities and proceed at a good pace. In a very good Year 4 literacy lesson, pupils focused on writing a newspaper story after carefully studying style and content in commercially produced newspapers with the support of the teacher. The teacher used an effective range of teaching strategies and had high expectations of what pupils could achieve and how they should behave. In this lesson, discussion and questions were used well to challenge pupils thinking, to inspire ideas and to see alternative possibilities. Whole class teaching was effective, but pupils also had the opportunity to work independently or collaboratively, which they did well. This resulted in pupils settling quickly to the task, working at a good pace and producing written accounts of good quality. In an excellent Year 6 science lesson, the teacher used her time well in monitoring and supporting pupils as they worked in groups discussing the effect of changing one variable in their investigation into friction. She listened carefully to the discussions, joined in when necessary, ensuring opportunities to extend and clarify pupils' ideas are effectively taken. In other very good lessons, teachers use questions well to check on past and present learning and develop the lesson successfully from pupils' responses. In a very good Year 6 physical education lesson, pupils explored shape with their bodies in relation to symmetry and three-dimensional shapes. Very good use was made of open-ended tasks and questions for example, 'What do you think will happen if ...?' or 'What do you think will be the effect of...?' The pupils responded with great enthusiasm and learnt a great deal from each other about how they could create shapes with their body.
22. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. In an excellent Year 6 information and communications technology lesson, the teacher's expertise and ability to demonstrate how to use a Power Point program excited the pupils. The teacher carefully balanced the amount of information he gave to pupils against effective questions to check on pupils' own knowledge. This resulted in pupils gaining a clear understanding of not only how to create, but also the purpose of, Power Point. Very good resources supported the pupils' learning well. The teachers' management of pupils is good, ensuring good levels of discipline and creating an industrious working atmosphere. Teachers show great sensitivity towards pupils' needs and as a result pupils feel valued and confidently contribute to the lesson. Pupils are eager to learn and when given their task, respond positively by working hard and producing good quality work that is matched to their ability. The good teaching is instrumental in helping pupils make good progress.

23. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good and is generally undertaken by the class teachers with the support of the special needs coordinator and the learning support assistants. The coordinator has a full teaching commitment and works in class alongside class teachers. An advantage of this arrangement is that the special needs coordinator works in every class in Key Stages 1 and 2, which allows her to monitor classroom work and to offer regular informal support to teachers in managing pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers are familiar with the process of identifying pupils who have special educational needs and follow correct procedures. Targets are specific and teaching is appropriately focused. Since the last inspection the school has developed a criteria list to help staff identify pupils who have special educational needs and as a result of the consistently good provision and teaching, it has recently been possible to raise the standards of the criteria. The learning support assistants who work with pupils who have special educational needs have very good relationships with the pupils and teachers. They are able to work in conjunction with the teachers to raise standards and to ensure that all pupils gain full benefit from their lessons
24. Homework is used well to support the work in classrooms. The regular use of homework is effective in promoting the development of reading, spelling and mathematics with pupils. Good use is made of the reading diary and has great value as an effective link between home and school. For older pupils there are good opportunities to extend the work done in class at home. For example, in Year 4, after studying words with similar spelling patterns, pupils are encouraged to look for words for homework.

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

25. The Foundation Stage curriculum for under fives provides for all areas of children's learning and meets their needs well. The planning meets the requirements for children who are under five as outlined in the foundation stage curriculum. The curriculum provides pupils with a good education that promotes their intellectual, physical and personal development and prepares for the next stage of their education in the school.
26. The school provides a curriculum of good quality which meets the needs of pupils well. It was a similar picture in the last inspection. In the previous inspection concerns were highlighted about the need for each curriculum area to have a policy and scheme of work and to make sure assessment of pupils' learning informs future planning and teaching. All subjects now have policies and schemes of work, and the core subjects have detailed assessment procedures in place. However, the foundation subjects still do not have formal assessment procedures. This is now a legal requirement following recent initiatives for the whole curriculum.
27. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented successfully throughout the school. The teachers' planning for literacy and numeracy is good. They identify tasks for pupils with differing abilities and establish a range of assessment opportunities. The school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils who have special educational needs. The special needs coordinator takes overall responsibility for the individual educational plans. The plans are stringently reviewed and this means that targets are always specific and relevant. Pupils benefit from the close liaison between the coordinator and their class teachers. Pupils who have special educational needs are included in all aspects of the curriculum and make good progress. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection

28. A good range of educational visits enriches and supports the curriculum. These include places of local interest such as Lichfield Cathedral, Moseley Hall, Black Country Museum and the Iron Bridge at Coalbrookdale. Residential visits by Pupils in Years 4, 5, and 6 at the county residential centre at Shugborough take pupils further afield and deepen their awareness of other environments. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good and provides a significant enrichment to the overall curriculum provision in school. All activities are well supported by pupils. A range of sporting activities is promoted including girls' and boys' football, netball and a gym club. The school organises a pottery club, choir, recorder clubs for beginners and more experienced pupils, green team club, cross-stitch and a drama club. These make a significant contribution to the learning opportunities available to pupils in the school.
29. The programme for personal, health and social education being offered to pupils is good. During lessons and in assemblies pupils explore a variety of issues of how to develop themselves and deal with difficult situations and issues that arise in their lives. For example, in a Year 4 joint assembly pupils were asked the question of what it meant or felt like to share things with a person you were not on good terms with, or treated you badly. The school nurse comes into school to talk about personal hygiene and discusses issues regarding growing up with older pupils in Key Stage 2. The school has a policy for sex education, and the police come into school to talk to the pupils about drugs awareness and 'stranger danger'. The head teacher and senior management team monitors both the planning and teaching of all aspects of the curriculum. All subject coordinators ensure there is adequate coverage to ensure continuity and progression for their curricular responsibilities.
30. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. A number of visitors come into the school to support and enhance learning in the classroom. For example the police and nurse come into the school to speak to pupils about a variety of issues. A member of the local British Legion come into school to talk about his war experiences and life in Britain from the 1940's onwards, which contributes to the pupils knowledge and understanding in their history lessons. A local historian also comes into school to talk about the development and growth of Essington through history. There are also well-established links with the local high school, and good links with the local nurseries and playgroup in the local area.
31. The overall experiences the school offers for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school provides a satisfactory range of experiences for pupils' spiritual development. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. In religious education lessons, pupils gain an understanding and appreciation of the main beliefs and principles of the main world religions. During assemblies pupils are encouraged to reflect on a variety of themes such 'sharing' and working as 'part of a team'. In a Key Stage 1 assembly taken by the local vicar, the pupils were asked to reflect on the plight of people in Eastern Europe, who were suffering shortages of food and basic warm clothing. In a reception class there was a sense of 'awe and wonder' when children watched the class teacher take the leaves off a 'Corn on the Cob'. However, in most assemblies and lessons there were limited opportunities for pupils to experience wonder or be given time to reflect in order to deepen their self-knowledge.

32. The way the school provides for pupils' moral development was good at the last inspection and has improved to being very good. The whole ethos of the school is directed towards distinguishing what is acceptable behaviour from unacceptable behaviour in school, and is constantly reinforced by all teaching and non-teaching staff. Assemblies provide a clear moral focus for instance 'helping your neighbour' or 'working as a team'. All staff provide good role models, which helps emphasis the moral provision in the school.
33. The experiences the school provides for pupils' for social development is very good and is strength of the school. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. The school has clear systems that ensure that all pupils are made welcome, along with the caring attitude of the staff, helps all pupils fit into the school's ethos and routines. All pupils are encouraged to work together in lessons and share ideas in a collaborative way when working, for instance in a design and technology lesson. Older pupils are given responsibilities in school, for example helping with the singing in whole school assemblies. Many visits out of school, including a structured programme of residential visits by pupils in Key Stage 2, help further develop this provision.
34. The cultural development for its pupils is good and is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. The curriculum offers a range of activities to develop pupils' local knowledge and cultural awareness. For example, through pupils' work on Essington in history and geography lessons, and listening to visiting speakers about its history. A wider cultural awareness is also developed through other curriculum areas such as art, in which pupils are made aware of the work of great artists. Pupils' in Year 6 have been exchanging 'E-mails' with 'Essington School' its partner school in Darwin, Australia. This is further developed by displays on the main corridor of the compute suite which contains painted figures depicting native Aborigines of Australia, native Red Indians of North America and children of the West Indians, which give pupils insights into different culture and life-styles from the past and present.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

35. At the last inspection this was considered to be good overall. Teaching and non-teaching staff are skilled, committed and caring. There was a very good induction programme and older pupils' transition to high school was satisfactory. Pastoral care was good and pupils were encouraged to take personal responsibility. There was a satisfactory health and safety procedure in place. The school has worked well at improving these aspects for pupils; overall they are now very good.
36. There are suitable health and safety and child protection policies in place, which are fully implemented across the whole school. All staff are aware that they must be alert at all times. Good communication in all care-related issues across the school ensure this is so. The school has dealt with the minor concern about the kiln in the school identified in the last inspection. The levels of cleanliness and general maintenance are good, particularly considering the size of the building. Pupils are carefully supervised throughout the school day, with staff monitoring from an early stage in the morning playground as pupils arrive. This results in a smoothly operating school. The member of staff with responsibility for child protection fulfils the role well. She has received training in and keeps up to date with the local child protection committee. All staff are kept well informed and have a high awareness as a result of the whole school policies and regular updating of information. They know and follow the procedures for any suspected cases of abuse. The relationships with the school's education welfare officer are regular and suitable to promote a trusting and beneficial effect.

37. Attendance and punctuality are carefully monitored, and the school works hard to improve attendance through its systems that follow up any unexplained or prolonged absence, with regular reminders to both parents and pupils about the benefits of good attendance. The educational welfare officer is a regular visitor to the school and reviews the attendance registers. He follows through on any matters and supports the school well by contacting families who do not respond to the school's letters.
38. The behaviour policy, which clearly works well, is based strongly on encouraging a caring and positive attitude between pupils and staff. There is a system in place for rewards along with clear guidelines for dealing with unacceptable behaviour. However, the policy is not sufficiently clear on how to follow through in cases where pupils refuse to follow these guidelines for good behaviour. Staff work hard at raising pupils' self-esteem through positive comments, a good personal health and social education programme and other responsible actions delegated to them. Procedures for the monitoring of personal development of pupils are satisfactory and are carried through all areas of school life, so those pupils feel valued. Teachers place very strong emphasis on building pupils' self-esteem and making them feel important. The school has a weekly achievements assembly and a house system of points for good behaviour. These have a positive influence on pupils. Parents, staff and pupils are all very well aware of the school's requirements for good behaviour.
39. The assessment of pupils overall is satisfactory. Although systems of assessment and record keeping are good in English and mathematics and satisfactory in science, there is no formal assessment or record keeping system in place in other subjects. As a result, teachers do not have a clear picture of pupils' attainment or progress. Pupils are regularly tested in English, mathematics and science. These assessments are effectively analysed by the teachers and consequently indicate what pupils know, understand or can do. The results of assessments are used purposefully to plan future work for individual pupils in most areas. The school effectively carries out the end of key stage assessments and does some analysis of these results to set targets for improvement, for example, in writing. However, this good practice is not evident in other subjects. Samples of pupils' work are kept to help teachers to make reliable assessments of their pupils' attainment in several subjects, for example in writing, mathematics and science. These records of achievement are an attractive record of the wide variety of experiences that the school provides. However, these samples do not always indicate what level has been achieved and make it difficult for teachers to judge precisely what progress pupils have made. Test results from assessment of children on entry to the school are carefully analysed and used effectively to plan sessions to meet the needs of all children. Across the school, the assessment of pupils' personal development is managed and carried out appropriately by staff.
40. The school uses appropriate procedures for identifying pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers assess pupils' progress and if there is need for intervention from an outside agency, the special needs coordinator is able to contact the appropriate agency for more specialist support. The co-operative approach in meeting pupils' special needs is a positive feature of the school provision, contributing well to the academic and personal development of these pupils.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

41. In the previous inspection parental links were considered to be good with most parents supporting the school, its values and appreciating the care the school generated towards the pupils. The parents association was considered to be active and beneficial. The school's information systems to parents were considered to be effective in informing parents about the school life. The school has worked hard to develop and improve these aspects from the last inspection further with successful results.
42. The regular newsletters are of good quality and value in informing parents of the school's social and topical events. Of particular merit are the open days held each year which allow parents the opportunity to see pupils being taught. They are very helpful in informing parents of what their children are actually doing in classrooms and therefore offer additional ways for parents to assist their children's learning at home. The meetings that the school has held to demonstrate the current teaching styles and curriculum are beneficial. The pupils' annual reports are satisfactory in content, although a few parents found them to be "impersonal" in style. The end of the school day gives another opportunity for parent/teacher communication and the school's "open door" policy provides further avenues for communication.
43. Parents are encouraged to assist in school whenever they possibly can. There are a small number of parents who come into school on a regular basis and successfully help pupils' learning by supporting them in lessons. These parents are used well by the school and they are given clear information on how to assist in classrooms. They support effectively in classrooms as well as on outside visits, both locally into the community and further afield. The Parent Teacher Association is very successful and diligent in continually raising extensive funds to support the work of the school. With their support the school has developed its library, increased the number of computers and is about to purchase a mini bus. They are also very successful in organising social events for both pupils of the school and adults within the community that are of great benefit to all.
44. The school's systems for initial contact with new parents and transfer of pupils to the high school are very secure and well planned. There is a helpful introductory pack available and early contact is arranged. The local playgroup makes positive use of the school's community room. This generates good links. The links with the high school are also well organised, with pupils visiting the high school early in the year and participating in lessons. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are properly involved with the special needs process. Parents are asked to attend review meetings and kept fully informed about their child's progress.
45. The information provided by parents at the meeting with inspectors and also the analysis of the returned questionnaires demonstrates that parents are very happy with the improvements made by the school since the last inspection and with the school's approach to their children's education and personal development. The positive return rate of the questionnaires demonstrated a high level of parental commitment and care about their children's education. Analysis indicates that parents feel that pupils like school, are well taught, behaviour to be good, expectations of work are high and pupils do make good progress. Inspectors fully agreed with the positive views expressed by the parents. There was no significant numbers of parents who identified aspects of the school that they thought could be improved.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The good quality of leadership and management identified has been maintained and successfully built upon. Very strong leadership makes sure the school focuses continuous improvement. This has a direct impact on teaching, learning and on educational standards achieved. This is evident from the rise in attainment and the improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection.
47. The headteacher is a very effective leader. His 'hands on' approach and high profile around the school works well in creating strong teamwork based on a shared vision and a real commitment to raising standards. His significant teaching and pastoral commitment provide a very positive professional role model. He has effective support from the deputy headteacher and the core-planning group. Planning meetings are held regularly and encourage good communication across year groups, key stages and curriculum areas. They facilitate the sharing of good practice and the continuity of approach and directly affect and improve educational provision in the classroom. They are enhanced by an 'open-door' policy that encourages other staff to attend. Coordinators become part of the group when their subject becomes a priority for action. The job descriptions of subject coordinators are wide ranging and have a strong focus on their role in the monitoring of teaching and learning. Where monitoring of teaching has taken place, principally in English and mathematics, this has proved to be effective. Teachers have received feedback and areas for development have been identified. All subject leaders have written action plans that show a good grasp of the strengths and areas of development in their subjects. Schemes of work have been written for all subjects since the previous inspection.
48. There is good practice in place for monitoring and evaluating pupil performance, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, this good practice is not in place in other areas although the school has plans to do this. An analysis of pupils' writing has resulted in spelling being identified as a weakness and a spelling strategy has been introduced to raise standards. Teacher assessment and the results of national tests in Key Stage 2 have been used to identify and target pupils for extra support. This has led to a significant improvement in the number of pupils achieving the higher level 5's in all three core subjects in the 2000 end of Key Stage 2 tests.
49. The governing body is effective and well led by the chairman. It provides good support for the headteacher and staff. Most of its statutory responsibilities are fulfilled except for omissions from the governor's Annual Report to parents. There is an appropriate system of committees, which allows governors to carry out their duties effectively. Governors are less active in decision making on curriculum matters although they are kept fully informed by the headteacher. Strategic financial planning is good. The finance committee considers strategic planning on the basis of projected pupil numbers and examines options that might be taken. The school budgets for all expenditures and is clear about the costs of developments. Since the previous report the governors have become more involved with evaluating value for money in terms of school improvement. Expenditure on staff is considered a high priority. After the previous inspection weaknesses in special educational needs provision were addressed by appointing a non-class based coordinator and this has been successful in raising the achievement of pupils with special needs. Specific grants are used appropriately and are effective. The funding received from the National Grid for learning, to improve provision in information technology, has had a positive impact on standards. The finance committee and headteacher regularly check expenditure using spreadsheets prepared by the school secretary. The day-to-day administration of financial matters by the office staff is good and this allows the headteacher and senior staff to concentrate on other priorities.

50. The school development plan is an effective management tool and is firmly focused on continual improvement. The whole staff and governing body are closely involved in its formation. Although detailed costs are not included governors decide each year upon priorities for action and agree amounts to finance these. Success criteria are used to evaluate the progress made.
51. The management of special needs is good. The special needs coordinator is experienced and liaises well with the class teachers and learning support staff to give pupils the extra assistance required for them to make progress and be fully integrated into the life of the school. Pupils who have statements of special needs receive their entitlement to extra support. Since the last inspection the coordinator has worked effectively to make sure that all pupils who have a special need are identified early, and in working alongside other teachers so that all staff are effective in delivering appropriate programmes of work. The administrative work is up to date and monitored regularly by the coordinator and the headteacher. The coordinator is updating her own specialist skills and her commitment means that there has been a significant improvement in the school provision for pupils who have special educational needs.
52. The school has an adequate number of teaching staff whose qualifications and experience broadly match the demands and range of the National Curriculum. They are effective both in their teaching and management roles. Support staff in the early years and those for pupils with special educational needs, work well alongside teachers and provide good support. The office staff efficiently carries out administrative duties. Caretaking and lunchtime staff perform their roles well and are valued members of the school.
53. The system for staff appraisal is good. The headteacher observes lessons and provides feedback to staff. This is used as a basis for identifying individual training needs. Headteacher appraisal is at present on hold until governors have received local authority training to help them identify relevant targets. The school has very good provision for the induction of new staff, especially newly qualified teachers. Newly qualified teachers have a teacher mentor to provide help and advice on a daily basis. They observe other teachers working and attend a series of planned training sessions. As a result they quickly become valued members of staff.
54. The accommodation is spacious and well maintained. The extensive grounds provide ample room for pupils to play on hard and grassed areas and provide a good learning resource. Recently the old middle school laboratory and domestic science room have been redesigned and refurbished to provide extra classroom space and the whole building is now used well, including the library. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. There are enough good quality resources in all subjects and this has a positive impact on standards. There is a weakness in the provision of outdoor play equipment for the younger children as there is no climbing equipment.
55. A key issue in the last inspection was to revise the aims of the school to focus on attainment, the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning and to evaluate school performance against these revised aims. This has clearly been achieved. The ethos of the school, shared by staff, pupils, governors and parents alike, is one of commitment to the achievement of the highest standards.
56. Accounts are computerised and the last auditor's report noted the improvements made in respect of financial administration since the previous report. All recommendations have been acted upon. The headteacher and governors look for best value in their purchases and monitor current spending regularly against the budget. They are well supported by efficient office staff.

57. Taking account of the context of the school, the good standards achieved, the average income per pupil, the good behaviour and relationships, the very good management and good teaching, the school gives good value for money.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

58. **In order to further improve the good quality of education the school provides and build on the improvements made since the last inspection, the governors, headteacher and staff should;**

1. Further raise standards in spelling by implementing, monitoring and evaluating the current planned programme of improvement highlighted in the coordinators' action plan; *(paragraphs 4, 77 and 78)*
2. Improve the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation of work by: -
  - reviewing current practice;
  - devising and establishing a more effective, systematic approach to the teaching of handwriting;  
*(paragraphs 4 and 77)*
3. Improve assessment by spreading to all subjects the good practice currently shown in English and mathematics. *(paragraphs 39, 104, 109, 116, 130 and 144)*

#### **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- Items missing from the governors' Annual Report to parents. *(paragraph 49)*
- Outdoor equipment for children under five. *(paragraph 59)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	81
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4%	19%	56%	21%	0%	0%	0%

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	405
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a	32

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	48

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	26	27	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	25
	Girls	27	26	24
	Total	52	51	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98	96	92
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	23
	Girls	26	25	22
	Total	50	50	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94	94	85
	National	82	86	87

### ***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	32	21	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	29	30
	Girls	18	16	19
	Total	40	45	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75	85	92
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	26	29
	Girls	18	18	21
	Total	40	44	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75	83	94
	National	68	69	75

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	404
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3
Average class size	28.9

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/a

Total number of education support staff	N/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/a

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/a
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	643,048
Total expenditure	642,536
Expenditure per pupil	1,635
Balance brought forward from previous year	28,430
Balance carried forward to next year	28,942

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	405
Number of questionnaires returned	148

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	27	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	66	31	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	34	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	39	8	0	5
The teaching is good.	69	30	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	33	3	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	21	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	23	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	64	32	2	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	73	26	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	64	34	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	32	4	3	9

## **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**

59. Since the last inspection, the good provision for children in the foundation stage, that is children under five years of age, has been maintained and is a strength of the school. Improvements since the last inspection include easier access to a safe play area, a computer suite, and relevant resources for children's multi-cultural development. There has been a satisfactory improvement in large play equipment, in the form of a netball stand and a climbing tunnel, but this area is to be developed further to include climbing frames and more wheeled toys. The reception class is well organised and well resourced and the good and very good teaching is having a positive impact on children's learning.
60. Sixty places are available in the reception Year and there are three intakes of children. There is one class of 28 children who started school in September and two part-time classes of 15 children who are admitted at the beginning of the spring or summer term in which they are four. Initial assessment records show that children under five enter school with average speaking and listening skills, number and personal and social skills. Pupils achieve well in all areas of learning and the good experiences provided in the foundation stage makes it likely that by the time they are ready to start Year 1, they will exceed the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy development, mathematical and physical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative development. They are on course to well exceed these goals in personal, social, and emotional development. Good assessment procedures are in place. When children start school assessments of their ability are undertaken and are used well to plan suitable programmes of work.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development.**

61. Children enter the nursery class with average skills in personal and social development. Most children continue to exceed the early learning goals in this area when they leave the reception class. This shows very good achievement and reflects the skilful teaching and provision where children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve, form good relationships, look after themselves responsibly and behave very well. Children enjoy their literacy tasks and appreciate the humour of stories such as 'Don't put your finger in the jelly, Nelly,' and watch with wonder as they discover the hidden cob in sweet corn. They have positive attitudes towards their learning, enjoy coming to school and form good relationships with staff and each other. They are beginning to work collaboratively in various role-play settings, such as in the 'café', during sand and water play and in the range of tabletop activities. Children work independently and learn the importance of taking turns and sharing construction equipment such as building blocks, fairly. In all the lessons seen, covering all the areas of the curriculum, they showed remarkable attention, concentration and self-restraint and early negotiating skills. The adults provide good role models, and always treat each other and the children with courtesy and respect. Children respond well. All children take responsibility for personal hygiene and most children slip on their pumps independently when changing for physical education and put on aprons when working with paint and water. Classroom displays and religious celebrations help children to become aware of different languages and cultures.

62. The quality of teaching is good. In the lessons seen it was always at least good and very good in 30 per cent of the lessons. Staff know how to plan well and present work effectively. Priority is given to the educational needs of young children. Good teaching maintains good behaviour and establishes an ordered routine, which offers security to young children. This makes a significant contribution to the very good learning environment found in the foundation stage and children make very good gains in their learning. There are well-established classroom routines, such as 'Tidy up' jingles as reminders and children settle very quickly into these, as seen in lessons after only three days into the school term. Appropriate resources are suitably placed and easily available for use to help children to learn how to choose and make decisions on their own. The teacher and nursery nurses encourage children to play well together and show consideration to one another, when using the wide range of activities. They are given good support by the nursery nurses who prompt them to use the toilet at appropriate times. Staff offer security to the children, for example, by not insisting that children change clothes fully for the first physical education lesson in a large, unfamiliar hall. The staff's constant, supportive, but firm manner results in a calm and purposeful atmosphere, which is encouraging learning. Teachers assess children's work when they start school by way of national tests and the results are used to plan suitable programmes of work. Procedures for assessment and recording of children's attainment are in place and are used, effectively, to inform parents of what children know, understand and can do.

### **Communication, language and literacy.**

63. Most children are on course to make good gains in their learning and exceed the early learning goals expected for this area of learning by the time they are ready to start in Year 1. They interact well with others, speak confidently, and take turns in conversation, as seen when they responded to dinner registration and volunteered reasons as to their choice of a school or packed lunch. They listen attentively to stories for an appropriate length of time and enjoy hearing and using sounds, such as the rhyming words in storybooks. Staff use talk to good effect and use communication skills effectively. For example a group of children showed good negotiating skills in the 'café', deciding who would be 'the chef,' 'the waiter' and 'the customer.'
64. After only a few days in school most children are at an early stage in their reading. They know that print carries meaning and that English is read from left to right and from top to bottom. The highest attaining child knows some letter sounds and attempts to blend words, such as 'can' successfully. Speaking and pre-reading skills are developed well and children are becoming aware of the format of a story, and know the meaning of words such as 'title', and 'cover'. They are beginning to recognise the initial sounds in familiar words such as the 'c' in the book 'Clever Cat' and higher attaining children know a selection of sounds and attempt to 'read' simple words. Many children can name sounds in words that they use frequently and confidently 'have a go' when writing initial sounds on the white board. Supplies of paper, pencils, pens and crayons are available and children readily use them.
65. The quality of teaching is good and helps children achieve well in communication, language, literacy, reading, writing and hand writing skills. Elements of the literacy framework are used well by the staff. Children get off to an early, but appropriate start, in their literacy skills and make good gains in their learning. A commercial reading scheme is used well to introduce children to reading activities and letter sounds. A good understanding of the sounds of letters and words is developed through effective word, sentence and text level work, using well known stories and rhymes. Good opportunities are given for emergent writing, such as seen in the menu writing in the 'Café' and the formal practice of handwriting skills on the white board, and on paper.

Progression in lessons is accomplished by revisiting past work, careful sequencing of tasks and consolidating the work at the end of the lesson. For example, in one successful lesson, chime bars were introduced to encourage careful listening before the sound 'c' was introduced to the class. Children then shared and identified objects brought from home beginning with 'c' and attempted successfully to write the letter, first as a group activity, then on their own. Resources are good and staff use them well. In one lesson the nursery nurse taught the class whilst the teacher administered the national assessment tests to specific children. Assessment is used well to record children's ongoing work during or immediately after the lesson. Computers are used to enhance reading skills, and children are well supported by a nursery nurse.

### **Mathematical Development**

66. Children are on course to exceed the standards expected for this area of learning by the time they are ready to start in Year 1. In relation to their level of initial attainment, they are likely to make improved good gains in their learning by the time they are ready to start in Year 1, because of the good teaching and interesting experiences provided. Children develop mathematical skills through effective use of practical activities, number rhymes, games and songs. Children thread beads and use number games to gain an understanding of the properties of number. They are acquiring a sense of the size of a number and its position in number, through number songs such as 'This Old Man' and 'Ten Green Bottles', and use relevant tabletop resources accurately when counting numbers. Most children count to 10 confidently, but less confidently to 20. The highest attaining child can count beyond this number. They confidently identify basic shapes, match and draw around circles, squares, rectangles and triangles and sort and match objects into large, medium and small sizes. They effectively use arbitrary measurement in their work, such as hand spans. Children successfully explore capacity through sand and water play.
67. The quality of teaching is good and helps children achieve well in counting, calculating, shape, space and measure. Systematic planning and provision allow children to progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematics. Expectations are generally appropriate regarding the teaching of number concepts, but in one lesson the level of challenge in teaching numbers to 20 for some children was too difficult and teaching was less effective. Adult provision is professional and supportive for children who are less confident. The nursery nurses are well deployed and contribute well to the good progress made in lessons. Very effective use is made of resources such as number puzzles to reinforce learning and to order numbers and individual number lines to consolidate class work on numbers 1 to 20. Staff makes good use of the voice to emphasize number rhythm and use praise frequently to encourage learning and raise self-esteem. Computers are used appropriately to enhance mathematical skills.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

68. Children are on course to make good, improved gains in their learning and exceed the early learning goals expected for this area of learning by the time they are ready to start in Year 1. Children enter with a satisfactory general knowledge and in relation to their levels of initial attainment they are on course to make good gains in their learning. Planning shows that work is progressively harder yet appropriate for all children. They have good opportunities to experience work in history, geography, science, design and information and communication technology. These subjects are linked and themed so that children understand a particular concept in a range of situations. Children look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change and in food technology make biscuits and recognise how food changes when it is cooked. They are able to

recognise and discuss different foods and their sources and clearly express their preferences, such as beans, milk, pears, meat, potatoes or pasta. They use a range of constructional equipment to design and build models and are able to cut, stick and join materials when making a plate for their food. Opportunities are given for the children to enhance their numeracy and literacy skills by using appropriate computer programmes and some are able to use the mouse and the cursor with support. Children understand the passing of time, through the regular use of significant times of the day and days of the week and visits to Shugborough Hall kitchen to compare old and new utensils. They observe, find out about, and identify features in the place they live and the natural world through visits to areas of outstanding natural beauty, such as Cannock Chase and working farms such as Northcote Farm. Through the topic 'Growing', children plant, grow and observe the growth of seeds. They learn about their attributes and use a magnifying glass to sort them according to colour, size, and texture. They learn about forces through using small vehicles in the sand. They begin to understand their own culture and beliefs and those of other people through the study of their locality and further afield and also other countries, such as Italy. They learn about celebrations such as St. George's Day, Divali and the Chinese New Year, which enhance children's knowledge and understanding of the world and different cultures.

69. The quality of teaching and provision is good and impacts positively on standards in exploration, investigation, designing and making and information and communication technology skills. Topics have appropriate objectives listed and interesting purposeful play activities clearly reflect the early learning goals. Staff ensure that children remain interested and concentrate by the pace of the lesson and change of activity when its purpose is completed. Literacy skills are developed through topic stories such as 'Don't put your finger in the Jelly, Nelly' and 'The Hungry Caterpillar'. Activities such as biscuit making, making and designing plates, 'Spaghetti Swamp' water play, and 'Café' role-play provide good opportunities for children to learn. Equipment and resources are easily accessible to support and help children achieve independence.

### **Physical Development**

70. Children are on course to exceed the standards expected for this area of learning by the time they are ready to start in Year 1. They are acquiring skills in movement, have a developing sense of space and bodily awareness and use tools and equipment with increasing dexterity. In relation to their levels of initial attainment they are on course to make improved, good gains in their learning. Planning shows that there are good opportunities for children to experience work both indoor and outdoor in physical education games and creative activities to develop their physical skills. All children move with confidence and safety and show good control and co-ordination as they travel around the hall using the space in a controlled manner. 'Warm up ' activities helped children to recognise changes that happened to their bodies when they are active. Appropriate resources such as beanbags help the children to control and balance an object on their hands successfully. They use wheeled toys and a climbing tunnel with increasing confidence. Outdoor large play equipment provision is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection, but further resources are to be purchased. Children show sound control and skill when handling scissors, for example when cutting out a fox's face. Manipulative skills are good. Children show increasing dexterity as they work with pencils, crayons, paintbrushes, use cutlery when eating and ' roll, squeeze, push and kneed' malleable materials such as play dough to make objects such as 'birthday cakes'.

71. The quality of teaching is good and impacts positively on standards in physical development. Planning is good, covers all the elements in this area of learning, and early in the academic year, gives appropriate priority to the needs of these children to engender security. Teachers encourage children to listen by speaking in whispers. They develop children's orderly behaviour in the way they tidy up. Children put away their beanbags in order when they are told, learning to recognise their colours as they do it. This results in positive attitudes towards physical education and good behaviour. Good resources and support staff contribute effectively to the acquisition and development of these skills.

### **Creative development**

72. Children are on course to exceed the standards expected for this area of learning by the time they are ready to start in Year 1. In relation to their levels of initial attainment they are on course to make improved, good gains in their learning. Children are encouraged to express their feelings through exploring media and materials, music, dance, story making and imaginative play. A developing eye for detail in what they see is shown in the good, large-sized observational pencil drawings of bicycle wheels, a guitar and kitchen utensils, such as spoons, ladles and knives. They have daily opportunities to use paint, collage and crayons to explore colour, as well as printing using, for example, car wheels. Children recognise familiar songs, nursery rhymes and jingles and sing them in unison with enjoyment, natural exuberance and zest. They use the 'café' effectively to experience imaginative play, developing social and negotiating skills.
73. Teaching is good. Staff plan well and provide effective opportunities for children to explore art and music. Imaginative play, such as the creation of a dinosaur land in the sand, using foliage and toy dinosaurs, triggers the imagination, extends language and develops decision-making skills. Good intervention by staff helps to support and extend their ideas and understanding. Effective use of resources motivates children who are well managed. Visitors enhance the children's musical experiences. For example, a guitarist accompanied the children's singing and his undoubted expertise inspired the children and adults to sing familiar songs in tune with natural exuberance and zest.

### **ENGLISH**

74. Standards of attainment in English are above average by the end of both key stages and have improved since the last inspection when they were judged to be average. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 national tests, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard (Level 2) was well above the national average in reading and writing. The proportion that reached the higher level (Level 3) was above the national average in reading and well above in writing. When the school's results are compared with schools with pupils from a similar background they are well above average. Although results have fluctuated slightly over the past three years, they have been consistently above the national average with a significant rise in 1999. The class of pupils who took the test in 1999 had a greater number of higher attaining pupils in the class than is normal for the school. In the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 national tests, the percentage of pupils who attained the expected standard (Level 4) was close to the national average and those attaining the higher level (Level 5) was below the national average. When the school's results are compared with schools with pupils from a similar background they are broadly in line but below in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 5. Trends over time show results are consistently above the national average but fell in 1999. This reflects the low numbers of pupils who achieved Level 5. The school identified the number of pupils attaining Level 5 as an area for

development and as a result of appropriate target setting and additional literacy support there has been a significant improvement in the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5. Most recent test results are significantly better with 53 per cent of pupils achieving Level 5 in 2000. There were no significant weaknesses highlighted in the last report.

75. By the end of both key stages pupils achieve average standards in speaking and listening. Pupils of different attainment are given a variety of opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills within small groups or in their literacy sessions. Most pupils at seven are articulate and use well-formed sentences and an appropriate range of vocabulary. This is evident when pupils in Year 1 proudly report to the rest of the class the sentences they have constructed during the lesson. In personal and social education, Year 1 pupils make finger puppets to represent themselves and members of their families. They enjoy making their puppets talk to the rest of the class so much that they take them out during playtime and further develop their speaking and listening skills. Year 2 pupils respond well to their teacher who asks them to close their eyes and imagine the sights and sounds of the seaside; they enthusiastically volunteer 'speedboats, dolphins, waves, ice-cream' and talk empathetically about the feelings of the characters in the text 'Come Away From The Water Shirley'. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils talk confidently about the life of Charles Dickens and as a result of careful questioning by the teacher are able to discuss perceptively the similarities between the author's life and that of the characters in three of his novels. Year 6 pupils talk empathetically about the moods, images and feelings evoked by listening to music. They further enhance their speaking and listening skills when discussing factors and square numbers in their mathematics lessons and in reporting to the class on their scientific investigations.
76. Reading standards are above average at the end of both key stages. The successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has increased pupils' standards and enjoyment of reading. Pupils have their personal reading diaries and the school continues to place emphasis on individual reading as well as the opportunities presented in the literacy hour. By the end of Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils read confidently and fluently from their storybooks. They are aware of the importance of punctuation and read with expression. Most pupils have a wide range of strategies for reading new words and self correcting more difficult ones. All pupils, including lower attaining pupils, have favourite books and talk of their enjoyment of reading stories in school and at home. They are familiar with a range of children's' authors and can comment on why they do or do not like a particular text. There are frequent opportunities during the literacy hour for pupils to practise their knowledge of letter and word sounds and pupils are confident in using these skills when they read. By the end of Key Stage 2, the best readers are able to discuss the text they read with clarity and understanding. They read with fluency and expression and talk enthusiastically about their enjoyment of books such as 'Charley and the Chocolate Factory' and 'Goodnight Mr Tom'. One pupil expresses a preference for poetry. Pupils are all able to select books from the library and use appropriate referencing skills to find information from non-fiction books. Pupils use their good reading skills purposefully in other areas of the curriculum.
77. Pupils' attainment in writing by the end of both key stages is above average, but their attainment in handwriting and spelling is not as high as their other literacy skills. The school has already identified this issue and has recently introduced a structured spelling programme. This has not yet had time to take effect but is intended to raise the standard of spelling throughout the school. The school also plans to monitor the provision for handwriting and write a policy defining the best way to teach handwriting throughout the school. The school has designated more time to extended writing in an

attempt to further raise standards of written work in the school. At the age of seven, pupils' handwriting is not always clear or well formed and only higher attaining pupils use a cursive style. Most pupils use capital letters and full stops and higher attaining pupils use speech marks appropriately. The pupils develop their ability to write instructions including making mince pies and making stars from lollipop sticks. Pupils show they understand and can write stories in sequence. There are some good examples of different forms of writing including making booklets with contents, index and glossary, character descriptions, and retelling of favourite known stories such as 'The Three Little Pigs'. Pupils plan their own stories. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils use good expressive language and demonstrate grammatical awareness in a variety of well-structured and planned work that includes letter writing, limericks, cartoon jokes, newspaper articles, reports, empathetic writing and descriptive writing. Examples of extended writing include autobiographical writing as famous historical characters such as Florence Nightingale and Emily Pankhurst. Pupils have interesting ideas, such as the account given of Posh Spice giving up singing to become a dinner lady at the school and add a little extra spice to lunchtimes, but generally the poor presentation and frequent inaccurate spellings detract from the overall level of attainment.

78. Progress in speaking and listening at both key stages is good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Progress in reading and writing is good; progress in writing is slowed down by the lack of effective teaching of handwriting. A planned programme to improve pupils' spelling has recently been introduced. The literacy hour is well established and effective teaching in many lessons is effectively teaching pupils the basic skills. The plenary session is used very well in most lessons to extend and reinforce ideas from the lessons and to provide valuable feedback. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn to listen carefully to their teacher and to each other and as a result they widen their vocabulary and learn to speak more clearly. In Key Stage 2, discussion skills develop well in religious education lessons and in developing appropriate scientific vocabulary. In reading, in Key Stage 1, pupils move progressively through the reading scheme and staff place a priority on hearing pupils read individually as well as during guided reading sessions. In Key Stage 2, library skills including research skills are progressively developed. Pupils have the opportunity to study different authors, for example, Dick King-Smith in Year 3 and Jacqueline Wilson in Year 4. Year 6 pupils study Charles Dickens. In Key Stage 1, progress in writing develops consistently with the emphasis on sentence construction, punctuation and imaginative work. Pupils in Key Stage 2 draft and edit their work to improve the structure, grammar and punctuation and make good progress in writing for different purposes. Year 3 rewrite traditional stories such as Jack and the Beanstalk and write accounts of personal experiences. Year 4 pupils develop their skills in writing reports and play scripts as well as writing in fairy tale style using reported and direct speech in their writing. Year 5 develop their skills in writing instructions for making scrambled eggs and letters of complaint about the state of the pond in the local park. They write the story of Little Red Riding Hood from Red Riding Hood's point of view and comment on the effectiveness of published leaflets. They plan and write stories in different genre for example horror and adventure. In Year 6 pupils make good progress building on and developing the skills taught in earlier years. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with help from additional support and appropriately challenging work from their teachers.

79. Pupils' attitudes are very good. They concentrate hard on their work and respond very well to the challenging work set by their teachers. Relationships between the pupils are very good; they are courteous to each other as well as to the adults in the classroom. These positive relationships make a pleasant and happy learning environment where pupils are keen to learn and have a good work output. During the literacy hour, pupils throughout the school develop their ability to work individually and in small groups.
80. Overall the quality of teaching is good. In Key Stage 1, all the teaching was satisfactory with 40 per cent good. In Key Stage 2, all the teaching was at least satisfactory with 87 per cent good or better. Staff have worked hard to improve the strategies for teaching the literacy hour. Learning objectives are clearly focused and explained to pupils at the beginning of the lesson. In the best lessons, teachers ask challenging questions to make sure that pupils think about their work: this was particularly evident when Year 6 pupils discussed the common themes in three of Charles Dickens' novels. Another feature of good teaching is that clear instructions are given so pupils know exactly what is expected of them and they can start their work promptly. A good example was in Year 4 when pupils had been comparing newspaper articles and then split into groups working on verb tenses and guided reading. Teachers make very good use of the plenary session to consolidate new knowledge and to encourage pupils to talk about their work. Work is well matched to the needs of the pupils and good relationships help pupils to make good progress in many of the lessons seen. Teachers praise pupils for their efforts and encourage them to work hard, pupils gain confidence in their own ability to succeed and try hard with difficult tasks. Year 5 pupils demonstrated this when they examined the poem 'Africa' by David Calder. The style of writing is unusual but despite this the pupils persevered in developing their own poetry in a similar style. Teachers continuously assess pupils' new learning and make good use the assessments to modify and refocus their teaching so their pupils continue to make good progress. Pupils who have special educational needs benefit from the support of non-teaching staff who work closely with the teachers to make sure pupils' individual needs are met.
81. The coordinator manages and leads the subject well. The coordinator and staff have worked hard to introduce and manage the National Literacy Strategy. Having analysed test results and samples of pupils' work, the coordinator is clear about the strengths and areas for development in the English curriculum and has initiated an action plan to improve standards. The inspection findings that spelling and handwriting need to be improved agree with the school findings. The coordinator has already introduced a comprehensive programme to raise the standard of spelling though it has not yet had time to take effect. The action plan also identifies handwriting as a focus for whole school monitoring and evaluation. The coordinator has collated a useful portfolio of work, which is a valuable reference document for staff in assessing pupils' attainment. School organisation is such that the coordinator is able to monitor teaching of the subject and give useful feedback to colleagues and so support staff in further raising standards. Resources for the subject are good and well used. The library was identified in the last report as needing to be updated. With the support of the parents the school has totally refurbished the library. It is a pleasant, attractive, well-maintained room named after the local writer, Allan Ahlberg. Pupils make good use of the wide range of well-organised books. The curriculum is enriched by a range of exciting activities such as visits from authors and reporters. There are lots of good example of pupils writing purposefully and many literacy tasks in other subjects are of a good quality, and contribute well to pupils' learning. There are appropriate opportunities in English and in other subjects for pupils to use and extend their emerging literacy skills in carrying out independent research. Overall, standards in literacy are above the expected level. Pupils use their word processing skills in writing stories and poems. Homework is given regularly and helps pupils' learning.

## MATHEMATICS

82. The 1999 National Curriculum test results show that by the end of Key Stage 1 the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 2) and above was close to the national average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level (Level 3) was well above the national average. By the end of Key Stage 2 the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 4) and above was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 5) was close to the national average. When compared with schools in a similar social context the results are well above at Key Stage 1 and above average in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, trends over time indicate that standards have gradually increased from 1996 to 1998, and rose significantly from 1998 to 1999. In Key Stage 2 standards have consistently increased from 1997 to 1999, and the most recent results indicate a substantial improvement of higher attaining pupils achieving the higher level (Level 5) compared to that of 1999. Evidence gathered during the week of the inspection indicates that pupils' attainment at the end of both Key Stages is above average, which is reflected in the results of the 1999 statutory test results for both Key Stages.
83. Since the last inspection the school has made significant improvements in the provision of mathematics and numeracy. Pupils' attainment and rates of learning and progress at the end of both key stages have improved substantially since the last report. Since the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy last year, all teachers have increased their confidence and enthusiasm in teaching the subject. They all have a wide variety of teaching strategies, which they employ in lessons, both in oral mental sessions and in problem solving approaches to learning about the subject. The over-reliance on teaching from a textbook or scheme that was highlighted in the previous report no longer exists.
84. Across the school, pupils' attainment in their work related to number, shape and spaces, and handling data are above the expected level in both key stages. Mental mathematics is particularly well developed in all classes and helps when pupils are solving problems. Pupils' rates of learning in lessons and progress over time in both key stages are good, and this includes pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with special needs are well supported in the classroom and appropriate tasks are planned by teachers.
85. At Key Stage 1, pupils in Year 1 confidently recite and count numbers up to 20 using a variety of ways. Higher attaining pupils in the class count the number of 'hairs' on a robot independently. Pupils in a Year 2 class successfully partition and separate 'units' from 'tens' and can explain clearly what they have done. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils confidently add two digit numbers and know that there is a 'tens' and 'units' column. Pupils use and understand mathematical language in their number work. This develops further when they work with fractions using halves and quarters, and money and time. They know what is meant by a line of symmetry and can recognise two and three-dimensional shapes. Most pupils use a tally chart and block graph effectively to gather information from.
86. At Key Stage 2, pupils in a Year 3 class know and understand the vocabulary when using addition, subtraction and the equals sign. They know that there are different families of fractions, and can round a number up or down. They confidently identify different shapes and know that there are different shapes, including finding and knowing what a right angle is in a quadrilateral shape. In Year 4, pupils can successfully find the difference between numbers up to a 100. They effectively classify and identify the differences between an equilateral, isosceles and scalene triangle, and know what is meant by tessellating shapes. In Year 5, pupils break down a

multiplication sentence to make it easier to calculate by using brackets. They know how to calculate the percentages of a number and use ratios and proportions in their calculations. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils confidently use the four rules of number using thousands, hundreds, tens and units. They successfully convert and reduce fractions and they can find the percentages of fractions. They are aware of different shapes and their properties and can recognise different angles and triangles. Pupils effectively use 2 and 3 figure co-ordinates, and gather and interpret information from graphs and charts. Pupils also have a developed mathematical understanding and use appropriate mathematical language with confidence. In problem solving they are developing their own strategies and can explain their reasoning.

87. Most pupils throughout the school have good attitudes towards their mathematical work. They enjoy taking part in the oral and mental parts of the lesson and in other activities planned for them in lessons. Most pupils work with enthusiasm and are able to sustain their concentration over long periods of time when working independently. For example in a Year 6 class pupils worked individually and remained focused on the task of finding factors to break down a multiplication sentence. In this and other similar lessons where pupils were investigating different strategies for calculating problems pupils show initiative in deciding how to approach and tackle a particular problem responding positively when working unaided. Behaviour in lessons is of a good standard throughout the school. A feature of the lessons observed is the high level of interest shown by pupils and their positive attitudes to learning and developing different strategies when working in mathematics.
88. The overall quality of teaching in both key stages is good. In the lessons observed the teaching is always at least satisfactory and is good in 65 per cent of lessons and very good in 25 per cent of lessons. In Key Stage 1 all the lessons were judged to be of a good quality. In Key Stage 2, in 50 per cent of lessons the teaching was good, and in 35 per cent was very good. Teachers' planning in mathematics and their subject knowledge are good. What is to be learnt is clearly identified and focused and the well-planned activities enable the objectives to be realised in lessons. In lessons the teaching is based upon good subject knowledge and a clear understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy. All teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve in lessons, including their behaviour and achievements in their work. Lessons are well structured and achieve a good balance between direct teaching and pupils being actively engaged in activities, which are well matched to their abilities. Teachers use questioning techniques well to assess and develop pupils' understanding, particularly in oral mental skills. For example, in a Year 4 class the teacher used her questioning skills effectively, differentiating her questions with pupils who were working on addition, to assess what individual pupils knew and understand. All teachers use time and resources well, which has a clear impact on the good rates of learning achieved by pupils in lessons. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 1 class, where the teacher made effective use of the classroom assistant, carpet area and the white board during a lesson to develop pupils understanding of reading and writing numbers up to 20. The marking in mathematics is consistent in all classes and teachers' comments encourage and motivate pupils to overcome any difficulties they encounter in their work.
89. There is a good curriculum for mathematics. There is good attention to mental and oral work and its application influences learning well across the curriculum. Across the school, work was seen that related to number, shape and space, the measures and the handling of data. For example, in a Year 6 physical education lesson pupils were required to make symmetrical shapes and tessellations with their bodies. In a Year 5 design and technology lesson, pupils were accurately measuring their materials to make a sandwich holder. The development of mathematical vocabulary in all classes

makes a positive contribution to the literacy development in the school. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development through the wide range of opportunities offered to pupils.

90. The coordinator manages and leads the subject well. There is a good range of resources available to support teaching and learning in both key stages. The coordinator is very well qualified and experienced, and very enthusiastic about the subject. She has successfully delivered training to other members of staff for the effective implementation of the numeracy hour. The subject policy and scheme of work are being updated to meet the requirements of recent initiatives in the subject. There are well-developed assessment procedures in place, which keep teachers and the coordinator well-informed and aware of how well pupils are achieving. For example, the coordinator monitors the formal assessment records of each class three times a year.

## **SCIENCE**

91. At the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 teacher assessments indicated that the number of pupils achieving the nationally expected level (Level 2) was below the national average, with none achieving the higher level (Level 3). The school performed well below the average for similar schools. Teacher assessment in 2000 show the number of pupils achieving expected levels had risen to around the national average but again with no higher Level 3's. Inspection evidence indicates that teachers have been over-cautious when assessing pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and that, overall, pupils are achieving in line with the national average and a few pupils above.
92. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 national tests, 92 per cent of pupils reached the expected level (Level 4) or above, with 30 per cent of these achieving the higher level (Level 5). These results were well above both the national average and those for similar schools for the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 and above for the proportion achieving Level 5. Over the past four years results show a trend upwards at both key stages. There are no significant differences in attainment between pupils of different ethnic background. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests the number of pupils achieving the Level 5 rose significantly to 45 per cent. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that these high standards are being maintained. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above average, the same as that found in the previous inspection.
93. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is at expected level and progress is satisfactory. In Year 1 they can locate and name parts of the human body and know that they are the same for all humans. Pupils in one Year 2 class show a good understanding of why some foods are healthy or unhealthy and are beginning to understand the need for a balanced diet. Through their work on materials pupils are beginning to acquire the scientific skill of observation, sorting and classifying. By the end of the key stage they are experienced at making predictions, sometimes based on everyday experiences, and have a simple understanding of the need for fair testing.
94. Standards seen in Key Stage 2 are above average and pupils make good progress. Many pupils presently at the beginning of Year 6 are already achieving at levels expected at the end of the year in most aspects of science. In one Year 6 class pupils showed a good understanding of friction after an investigation rolling marbles down ramps with different surfaces. Year 5 pupils deepened their understanding of solids after investigating aerated solids such as sponges. In an introductory lesson on habitats pupils in Year 4 showed good previous knowledge of creatures as they predicted where 'minibeasts' might be found within the school grounds. Year 3 pupils

showed a satisfactory knowledge of the properties of common materials as they sorted and classified them according to simple criteria. They have a good knowledge of the natural world, materials and their properties and the physical world.

95. The development of investigational skills, particularly in Key Stage 2, is good. Pupils acquire much of their knowledge and understanding through practical work. Pupils in Year 5 are beginning to use their own ideas to plan investigations. Year 6 pupils are confident in planning fair tests and understand which variables should be controlled or changed. They are beginning to understand that to change a variable, such as the height of the ramp or the size of the marble in their friction test can affect their results.
96. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good at both key stages. In most lessons there is a real sense of enjoyment and enthusiasm for work. This is seen particularly when pupils are investigating. They show good cooperative skills when working in groups. In some classes they become involved by asking questions and making observations, for example in Year 6 when the teacher was demonstrating how different forces were acting on objects. Behaviour is generally good. In occasional lessons pupils became restless and talkative when they were unsure of what is expected of them.
97. Overall the quality of teaching is good at both key stages. At Key Stage 1 it is good in half the lessons and satisfactory in the other half. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In Key Stage 2, the teaching was always at least satisfactory, good in 30 percent, very good in 30 percent and there was one lesson of excellent quality in a Year 6 class. The quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6 in particular has been an important factor in the consistent rise in the number of pupils reaching expected levels or higher. All lessons are well planned and learning objectives are shared with pupils. There is good emphasis on the use of correct scientific vocabulary and many classrooms have lists displayed of relevant topic words as an aid to report writing. Learning in all lessons reflects the quality of teaching. Where teaching is good or better teachers show secure subject knowledge. Pupils are actively involved in their own learning. Teachers successfully use open ended questioning to encourage pupils to think and to find answers for themselves for example when Year 5 pupils discussed the findings of their solids investigation. Pupils learn at their own level of understanding. When pupils have misconceptions teachers show good intervention skills. In Year 6 a teacher challenged a boy's thinking when he suggested that a pile of paper stayed on a stool because of its mass by leaving one sheet there to show that this could not be the reason. Homework is set in both Year 6 classes to develop pupils' understanding of forces. Progress is slower when inadequate use is made of assessment to find out what pupils already knew. Higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged when sorting and classifying materials and extension work has not been planned. The overuse of worksheets identified as a weakness in the previous inspection has been rectified in Key Stage 2 however, on occasions work in Key Stage 1 is recorded mainly on worksheets. In some cases these lead to closed rather than open-ended investigations which limit pupils' attainment.
98. Leadership for science is strong and has been a factor in the rise in standards. The coordinator has good subject knowledge and has attended recent courses to improve her teaching and management skills. She is confident that standards can rise higher and has identified the further development of assessment as a priority, particularly in Key Stage 1. Teachers have been provided with assessment guidance linked to the new scheme of work. A useful portfolio of work has been compiled to help in judging attainment levels. The monitoring role of the coordinator is well developed and includes classroom observations to evaluate the quality of teaching. Resources for science are good. The school grounds and the immediate locality are well used for environmental science. Planning for science is thorough. The coordinator has

prepared a detailed scheme of work, based on national guidelines, which maps out progression in knowledge and skills. It is being implemented this term. Assessment is generally sound. Assessments are carried out for each topic and records of pupil's attainment are passed from year to year, enabling teachers to track progress. These are well used particularly in Years 5 and 6 to target pupils and raise end of key stage performance. Pupils' literacy skills are further developed through the subject through extended writing and reading for research. Pupils' information and control technology skills are further developed through the subject for example, sensor and data handling programs.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

99. For all pupils at age seven and eleven standards are broadly similar and on occasion exceeding those generally expected of pupils of this age. The school has maintained the standards identified in the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress in both key stages.
100. The work of pupils in the lesson observed in a Year 2 class demonstrated a good ability to investigate different textures, using crayon, pastel and felt-tip pen when making observational drawings of an 'Old Bear'. This is related to a theme on 'Me and My Family' that the class is studying in their art lessons. This is built on and developed when pupils move into Key Stage 2 and further develop their artistic skills, understanding and knowledge. They are able to observe and produce different pieces of work with greater detail to create a more realistic effect in their work. This was seen in a Year 3 class, where pupils used line and tone in their observational drawings when walking around the school building. They also began to develop the skill of using 'light' and 'dark' shading in their work, and some pupils took photographs with a digital camera to see if it matches their work in their sketchbooks. In a Year 6 lesson pupils are able to assemble and collect source material for future work in their art lessons. They begin by looking at 'movement' and use another pupil's body movements to produce 'first-hand' observational drawings using either pen or pencil.
101. Work on display in the school demonstrates that pupils have acquired the skills to produce quality work in the style of a range of artist, for example Monet, Riley, O'Keefe and Leonardo da Vinci. The subject also makes a positive contribution to other subjects in the curriculum and to the pupils' spiritual and cultural development. In addition, members of the after-school 'Art Club' are painting a corridor wall to portray all the major events of the twentieth century, which helps promote the subject across the school.
102. All pupils have good attitudes to art and display enthusiasm for their lessons. They are attentive and involved, working co-operatively upon a range of themes. Relationships between pupils are very good. They appreciate the efforts of other pupils and make positive comments about each other's work. Behaviour is very good. Pupils concentrate well on their work and pay good attention when observing works of art. They persevere industriously with their projects and take care, working with a sense of purpose and pride.
103. In the lessons observed the teaching was good. In the lessons seen all the teaching was good. Teachers are well prepared and use a variety of artefacts and resources to stimulate pupils' imagination and understanding. For example, in a Year 2 class, the teacher brought in her old 'teddy bear' to help pupils develop their understanding of different textures. Teachers give clear instructions and explanations and use appropriate interventions to help pupils improve the quality of their work. This results in pupils being enthusiastic and interested in the subject. For example, as was seen in a

Year 6 class when pupils were keen to discuss their observational sketches with their partner and with the rest of the class. Pupils are careful with the equipment and try hard to produce their best work. Pupils sensibly put out and clear away resources, which makes a positive contribution to their social development.

104. The coordinator leads and manages the subject well. This is reflected in the quality of displays in each classroom, considering that the school is only just into the new academic year. There is a policy and scheme of work, which are being reviewed in the light of recent curriculum initiatives in the subject. The coordinator monitors teachers' planning, but there are currently no formal assessment procedures in place to plan for pupils' future needs in the subject. The resources for art are of a good quality, which helps make the subject a positive feature of the school. Pupils' literacy skills are further developed through the subject through extended writing and reading for research. Pupils' information and control technology skills are further developed through the subject for example, 'Paint' programs and the use of CDs to seek information.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

105. The standards which pupils achieve at age seven and eleven are at the level expected of pupils at this age. This maintains the standards identified in the last report. Since the last inspection the school has addressed the issue of having a policy and a scheme of work which is currently being updated to meet recent initiatives in the subject. Teachers are also more confident in their teaching, another issue highlighted in the previous inspection, and this is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and rates of learning in lessons. Pupils' progress in both key stages, including pupils with special educational needs, is satisfactory.
106. At Key Stage 1, pupils know and understand that a design can be both modified and improved to help in the construction stage. This was seen in a Year 1 lesson where pupils were successfully drawing and labeling a series of designs of different levers they were observing. They effectively used a variety of toys, models and everyday equipment such as a pair of scissors and a stapler to show where the pivotal point of the lever was. As pupils move through the key stage they can design and make a model and on its completion they can evaluate and suggest ways of improving it. For example, in photographic evidence of work previously completed pupils evaluated their model of a sledge and gave reasons on how they could improve it. Pupils also experience food technology and pupils have designed and made a 'Giant Jam sandwich'. This provision was noted as being under-resourced in the previous inspection and has been significantly improved.
107. At Key Stage 2 pupils' designs become more sophisticated and they learn to think about the purpose of their models before constructing them. For example, in a Year 5 class pupils were designing and making a 'Sandwich Holder' to investigate and evaluate a range of different packaging materials. During the construction using paper and glue, pupils had to modify and change their designs if it was to fulfil its specific purpose of holding a kitkat bar, sandwich and Satsuma. Pupils also work with different materials which helps develop different strategies using different tools. For example, pupils in a Year 4 class were designing a purse or container to hold money in. Pupils discussed which materials to use, how to hold the materials together, and what type of tools and equipment are needed to make a successful purse. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can measure accurately, cut, fold and join different materials using a range of tools and strategies. For example, pupils have designed and made a tower block, using a weight as the lift and a pulley to move it up and down. They also evaluated and modified the model during the course of its construction.

108. The quality of teaching is good. In the lessons seen the teaching was good and there was one lesson of very good quality. Pupils are taught how to handle different materials and to evaluate and modify their ideas, designs and models. During the lessons observed teachers use skilful questioning and intervention to interest and spark ideas off the pupils. They also pay particular attention to developing pupils' personal and social skills by expecting them to work together and co-operate in designing and making a model or construction. This was seen in a Year 5 class, in which pupils worked well together in groups sharing equipment and tools as well as evaluating the success of their group model. Pupils enjoy their design and technology lessons and are keen to discuss their work with pupils and adults alike.
109. The subject coordinator who is enthusiastic and experienced leads and manages the subject well. She monitors and evaluates weekly planning but there are currently no formal assessment procedures in place to offer information on pupils' future learning in the subject. The school is well resourced with a range of materials and tools for pupils to work with. This contributes well to the range of experiences offered to pupils in the school.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

110. Standards found in the last inspection have been maintained and are similar to those expected for this age. The majority of pupils attain an appropriate quality of work in relation to their ages at the end of both key stages and there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in gaining the key knowledge and skills of the subject.
111. Through the geographical themes taught in each key stage pupils experience, exploration of places, acquire, use, and extend geographical skills and vocabulary, and investigate a number of thematic studies. Geographical understanding builds on a variety of experiences moving pupils from local to wider and contrasting environments. Geography is taught through a two-year cycle of topics in Key Stage 1, and study units in Key Stage 2. The subject is taught in blocks for most, but not all terms in the year. This cycle covers the work that has to be learned in the National Curriculum. There were no significant weaknesses highlighted in the previous report and standards continue to be satisfactory.
112. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are at the expected level for this age. A structured programme of geographical topics ensures that pupils make good gains in their learning. They make accurate observations of the characteristics of the school and of the local buildings in the vicinity, such as the church and the variety of housing. They plan routes to school and use directions such as 'left' and 'right' accurately. Pupils have an increasing awareness of the physical and human features of Essington and compare them with those of Lichfield. They express opinions about the wider world, which many experience on family holidays. Year 1 and 2 pupils draw and label simple maps and routes and visit Birmingham airport as part of their topic 'Going Places'. They begin to use appropriate geographical vocabulary, such as hill, valley and river.
113. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have an appropriate knowledge of their own region, other countries and contrasting areas. Years 5 and 6 study European countries such as Italy and Denmark and research into its human and physical features. Year 5 pupils are able to identify and describe what places are like in an economically less-developed country such as India. They use mapping skills to identify its location and research into its features such as its size, population, landscape and food. By the end

of the key stage they give simple, but logical explanations of the connection between landscape, weather and settlement and the effect of settlement and exploitation of resources on the environment, using the appropriate vocabulary. Year 4 pupils investigate ways in which people affect the quality of the environment, positively and negatively. They discuss sensibly the negative effects of pollution, such as the greenhouse gas effect and the protection of endangered species. Year 3 pupils use the school grounds to research the good and bad things that change over time has brought. Pupils build on their earlier mapping skills. They use secondary sources such as aerial photographs, globes and atlases to support their work and they locate continents, oceans and major countries. They use appropriate vocabulary such as 'source', 'mouth' and 'confluence'. They study maps of different scales and features, and use colour coding and a key. Year 6 successfully sketch from memory a recognisable map of the British Isles. At present, assessment is not used frequently or consistently enough by all teachers to inform daily planning.

114. Pupils enjoy the subject and begin new tasks with enthusiasm. They collaborate well in small groups, for example, in finding out about the changes over time in Year 3. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to their work are always good. They listen carefully and are always willing to share their ideas. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to plan topics for themselves and to pursue independent lines of enquiry for example, in reading for research or using their independent writing skills. The vocabulary they learn extends their literacy and they develop extended writing skills appropriately in this subject. Pupils work well independently or when co-operating in groups.
115. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is good. In the lessons seen it was always at least satisfactory and good in 67 per cent of lessons. In the best lessons, objectives are made clear to the pupils and the school grounds are used well to demonstrate man-made changes to the school environment. Very good questioning of pupils, a brisk pace and challenging work contributed to a Year 4 lesson on the environment. Pupils work hard and maintain their enthusiasm resulting in good behaviour and gains in key geographical knowledge and skills. Books are marked regularly, with positive remarks aimed to take pupils' learning forward.
116. The school has successfully invested time and effort in the subject and has set realistic targets for improvement. The coordinator of the subject is clear-sighted and energetic and has shared her subject knowledge, professional training and expertise with class teachers through a structured programme for improvement within the school. She has clear ideas as to how she wishes the school to proceed and prioritises according to need and finance available. The scheme of work forms a detailed and helpful guide for teachers with clear identification of what pupils are to learn by the end of each unit of work. This provides consistency of approach in order to ensure progression and continuity of pupils' learning. However, the approach to assessment and recording of pupils' attainment is not consistent. The quantity and quality of resources have improved since the last inspection and are adequate. Geography makes a positive contribution to the pupils' moral and cultural development. For example, pupils discuss the issues raised by pollution and younger pupils become aware of cultural differences such as the lives of pupils in India. Pupils' literacy skills are further developed through the subject through extended writing and reading for research. Pupils' information and control technology skills are further developed through the subject for example, the use of CDs to seek information.

## HISTORY

117. Standards found in the last inspection have been maintained and are similar to those expected for this age. History is taught through a two-year cycle of topics in Key Stage 1, and study units in Key Stage 2. This cycle covers the work that has to be learned in the National Curriculum. The majority of pupils attain an appropriate quality of work in relation to their ages at the end of both key stages and there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Most pupils acquire, use and extend history skills and vocabulary through investigations. There were no significant weaknesses highlighted in the previous report and standards continue to be satisfactory.
118. Pupils have a sound understanding of the historical concepts and knowledge expected of seven-year-olds by the end of Key Stage 1. They have a satisfactory awareness of chronology by sequencing events in their own lives from when they were born to the present day. Year 2 pupils begin to understand the passage of time by discussing the differences between the past and the present relevant to their own lives and relatives. They know about life in the past and have a satisfactory understanding of how education and domestic life have changed over time. In Year 1, pupils compare past and present domestic features such as forms of heating and cooking. They compare stoves and kettles of the past with the electrical appliances of the present. They know and write accounts about famous people such as Florence Nightingale, Louis Braille and Guy Fawkes. Their skills in historical enquiry are appropriately developed by visits to places such as Lichfield Cathedral.
119. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a greater understanding of chronology and are able to find and link information from a variety of sources. Year 6 pupils research into historical, local and family events since 1930 and place them correctly onto a time-line and produce an accurate, written definition of the word 'chronology'. In Year 5, pupils research in more depth into the history of Essington, and use the local Hilton Hall as a focal point to look for evidence of changes. Pupils are able to use and interpret information from pictorial and written sources and are aware that there are different versions of the same historical events. Year 3 pupils describe the main features of life in a past civilisation such as the Ancient Greeks and demonstrate satisfactory geographical skills when they locate significant human and physical features of the country. Year 4 increase their historical knowledge as they study the reasons for the fall of the Roman Empire and use their geographical skills to locate the relevant places. In Year 6, pupils gain insight into what life was like for people living in significant periods in English history such as the Tudors and the Elizabethans.
120. Visits and visitors are used effectively to enhance the history curriculum. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 visit Shugborough Hall and Lichfield Cathedral to reinforce work on life in the past and study famous people such as Samuel Johnson. Years 5 and 6 pupils visit the 'Black Country' museum in connection with their World War II study. Visits by theatre groups enhance the study of The Tudors and the Aztecs and a local inspirational speaker talks about the local community. The provision of information and communication technology resources has improved since the previous inspection and the school accesses the Internet. Pupils' information and control technology skills are further developed through the subject for example, the use of CDs to seek information.

121. Literacy skills are developed well in history through extended writing although the work is not always presented satisfactorily. In Year 2, pupils write knowledgeably about characters such as Florence Nightingale, Louis Braille and Guy Fawkes. In Year 4, stories such as 'The Wooden Horse of Troy' are linked to the work on Ancient Greece. Pupils know that roots of English words are made from Greek ones and write 'The Battle of Marathon' either as a story or a play. They write about the Greek philosophers such as Plato and Euclid and the story of 'The Wooden Horse of Troy'. In Year 6, they write a play about the 'Evacuees' and 'The Diaries of Anne Frank'. Years 2 and 3 write about their visits to museums and historical sites.
122. Most pupils had positive attitudes to their learning in history. They respond readily to the teachers' questions and work with interest. Pupils discuss their work sensibly and show an enthusiasm to find out about what happened in the past.
123. Teaching in history is satisfactory and standards have been maintained. In lessons observed at Key Stage 2, 67 per cent of lessons observed were satisfactory and 33 per cent were good. Insufficient teaching of history was seen in Key Stage 1 to give a firm judgement, but from the lesson seen and analysis of work, teaching is judged to be satisfactory. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall with some good teaching seen. In Year 5, good teaching builds well on what pupils already know and extends their knowledge by focussed questioning and use of appropriate resources, resulting in good gains in their learning.
124. The management of history is good. The coordinator of the subject is clear-sighted and energetic and has shared her subject knowledge, professional training and expertise with class teachers through a structured programme for improvement within the school. The school has invested time and effort in the subject, has set realistic targets for improvement and has made good use of the national guidance for planning. She has clear ideas as to how she wishes the school to proceed and prioritises according to need and finance available. There is now a more structured approach to the subject through a policy and a scheme of work, currently under review. Structured guidance is offered by way of 'topic' resources to ensure the step-to-step development of skills. The reliance on worksheets, evident at the time of the last inspection, has been partly replaced by the school's own, which emphasise the use of questioning and the use of sources in topic work. A portfolio of completed work is kept for teachers' reference and the school has a bank of history statements for recording pupils' achievements. There are few formal on-going assessments or records kept of pupils' skills. There are no opportunities for monitoring teaching and learning but plans are in place for this to take place. Resources are good and have improved since the previous inspection, but the acquisition of artefacts relies heavily on teachers and pupils. Computer resources have improved since the previous inspection and the school has some CD Roms such as 'Eye Witness of the World', and also has access to a local Essington web site. Pupils' literacy skills are further developed through the subject through extended writing and reading for research. History makes a positive contribution to the pupils' cultural development. All pupils are developing awareness of their cultural heritage through the study of the curriculum and relevant visits.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

125. Standards at the end of both key stages are above national expectations and pupils make good progress in developing their skills throughout the school, including those pupils with special educational needs. Attainment has risen since the previous inspection when standards were average compared to other schools. Significant factors in this improvement have been the commitment to staff development and the creation of the information and communications technology suite, both of which have had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Lessons seen during the inspection were all related to word processing and associated skills. Most were the first lessons of the school year and concentrated on reinforcing previously learned skills. Other evidence has been gained from the sampling of pupils' work and from talking to staff and to pupils.
126. In Key Stage 1 pupils are becoming proficient at using the keyboard and the mouse. They are able to open the 'First Word' program, write their names in upper and lower case letters save and exit. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 can change font size and type. By the end of the key stage pupils use CD ROMs such as 'World Explorer' and 'Children's Dictionary' to find information. They can use paint and draw applications to produce pictures. With support they can enter information on to a database and represent it using block graphs. From Year 1, pupils begin to control the movement of 'Roamer' floor robots by entering instructions; by the end of Year 2 most pupils are able to write simple programs to move the robot around a given route.
127. Throughout Key Stage 2 all pupils make good progress developing word processing skills. In Years 3 and 4 pupils are confidently able to use most of the functions of 'First Word' to create a document. They use icons and menus purposefully to change the size, style, alignment and paragraphing of text. They know how to introduce colour. Year 4 pupils successfully incorporate graphics and text. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 built on their understanding of the 'Publisher' program to create and effectively edit a presentation using 'Power Point'. In both year groups pupils showed confident keyboard skills and were successful in creating text slides on to which they applied design and, in Year 6, transition effects. All Key Stage 2 pupils have access to the Internet and have their own e-mail address. They happily use the World Wide Web and CD ROMs regularly to carry out research for other subjects. Year 3 pupils have successfully been able to find a web site with information on the Ancient Greeks that they downloaded and printed for their projects. By Year 6 pupils have developed a wide range of skills and many pupils are competent, independent users. They are confidently able to search the web and locate information and can combine text and print from different web sites. They have used 'Publisher' effectively to create advertisements and information sheets about 'My Body'; creating picture and writing boxes with frames. In maths and science they competently collect and input data and can present information in a variety of graphs and charts. Pupils confidently use spreadsheets, for example to collate weekly takings from the school 'tuck shop.' They use sensors purposefully to measure temperature over a period of time. In control technology pupils progress from using the 'Roamer ' to using 'Super Logo' to write programs to create, by Year 6, complex geometrical shapes.
128. Positive attitudes and good behaviour are important factors in pupils' high achievement. Pupils are keen to learn; the vast majority listen attentively during the teacher instruction and show their understanding by their eagerness to answer questions or demonstrate their skills. This contributes to their progress when working on the computers. Working in pairs, they show good cooperative skills when composing documents and wait patiently for their turn to use the keyboard.

129. Teaching overall is good. In the lessons seen the teaching was always at least satisfactory, good in 30 per cent of lessons, very good in 15 per cent and excellent in 30 per cent. This has a positive effect on standards. Teachers plan their lessons well and the learning objectives are made clear at the outset. In the most effective lessons pupils are given the opportunity to discuss what they have learned. Good use is made of the computer suite, where all teaching takes place, allowing teachers to instruct directly to all pupils using a projector and big screen. Correct emphasis is placed on the use of the development of relevant technical vocabulary. Pace in most lessons was good; occasionally the length of whole class instruction was too long for some younger pupils who became restless and were anxious for 'hands on' experience. Teaching was most effective where the correct balance was achieved between the time devoted to the demonstration of skills and the time allowed for pupils to practice them and this resulted in pupils making good or very good progress. All teachers showed strong subject knowledge, enabling them to teach with confidence. In these lessons teachers used assessment well to provide a starting point for follow up work. Effective support was given to pupils as they worked both by teachers and support assistants. Relationships between staff and pupils were good and good use was made of praise to emphasise achievement and to enhance self-esteem.
130. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable coordinator provides strong leadership and direction for the subject and is well aware of what is needed to raise standards further. She has correctly identified control technology and modelling as the weakest aspect of the curriculum and is set to purchase this year a more diverse range of hardware and software packages to enable older pupils to widen and deepen their experiences. This is part of a detailed action plan to enhance provision. The previous inspection identified significant weaknesses in the subject. These have largely been improved, particularly the training of staff which is still continuous and the adequacy, quality and range of hardware and software, which is now good except for control technology. Because of the rapid rate of development since the inspection there is no scheme of work at present although good use is made of national guidance, and statutory requirements are being met. Detailed skills lists for each program are used well in planning lessons to ensure progression in skills development. There is some assessment taking place but this is under-developed across the school and remains a weakness. The coordinator checks half-termly planning and offers advice and support to staff. Pupils' work is sampled regularly. This term she is beginning to observe lessons across the school to monitor the quality of teaching and learning.
131. Information technology has a high profile. It is taught both as a separate subject and to support most other subjects. The school has its own web site that, during the inspection, was voted 'Web of the Week' as the best primary school site in Staffordshire. Both staff and older pupils are involved in updating it regularly. E-mail facilities are well used, in particular to correspond with schools in other countries. The headteacher and coordinator use every opportunity to bid for grants to improve provision. For example, the school has just been awarded a government grant of £3000 to research how email can be used to raise the standards of writing.

## **MUSIC**

132. Standards found in the last inspection have been maintained and are similar to those expected for this age. Pupils achieve appropriately and reach the expected level for their age at the end of both key stages. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in gaining the key knowledge and skills of the subject.

133. At Key Stage 1, standards in music are on course to meet national expectations by the time pupils reach the end of the key stage. Pupils know that the body can be used to create different sounds and listen and repeat sounds. Year 2 pupils improvise musical patterns, creating sounds and organise them into simple structures. They develop skills in working together and in listening carefully to their teacher and to one another. Pupils control sounds through singing and performing. Pupils apply very good creative effort to make musical patterns using their voices and body parts. They listen with concentration and internalise and recall sounds with increasing memory. They are beginning to understand, use and combine musical elements, such as dynamics and tempo to build up texture in their compositions.
134. At Key Stage 2, pupils build on their knowledge and skills. They listen, with attention to detail, to a variety of recorded musical sounds. They recognise how composers and songwriters convey their intentions and translate them into performances through mood and atmosphere. Year 6 boys and girls were equally interested in listening to and expressing their feelings aroused by the different moods conveyed, such as in 'The 1812 Overture' by Tchaikovsky and 'The Swan' by Saint Saens. In another Year 6 class, pupils compared and gave reasons as to why contrasting music such as 'Voices' by Vangelis and 'Jingo' by Jellybean evoke different feelings such as challenge and joy. Year 6 pupils have some knowledge of composers, instruments of the orchestra and the use of different instruments for effect. Pupils are introduced to appropriate musical vocabulary as they analyse, and express opinions of the sounds heard. They have opportunities to compare, evaluate and make suggestions as to the quality of their performances.
135. In the few lessons seen pupils' attitudes to music were good. Both boys and girls apply effort in their lessons, show interest and contribute equally well. Minor incidents of misbehaviour are dealt with speedily and effectively.
136. The quality of teaching is good. In the lessons seen the teaching was good in 75 per cent of the lessons seen and very good in 25 per cent. Where teaching was very good, pupils make very good gains in their knowledge and skills. The teaching was well planned and tasks were reinforced well to extend pupils learning. There was good management of pupils so that everyone applied effort and the very few pupils who became restless were admonished appropriately and quickly regained interest. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher's very good sequential planning allowed pupils to extend their musical knowledge and skills as they explored the variety of sounds which can be made by using body parts and voices. They performed effectively, using these sounds to create a steady rhythm, progressing to the addition of loud and soft sounds, (dynamics) and use of the voice. (texture). No lessons were seen where pupils were using tuned or untuned instruments.
137. The coordination of music is effective and good progress has been made in raising the subject's profile. Literacy skills in music are developed well through the acquirement of good listening skills, the understanding of musical vocabulary, and descriptive writing. A policy is in place and the school has plans to re-view the scheme of work. There has been significant input into support for staff by way of clearly defined objectives of the skills, knowledge and understanding required to teach music effectively and this is beginning to raise standards. Planning shows that pupils' listening, and applying knowledge and understanding are developed through the interrelated skills of performing, composing and appraising. There is no consistent approach to assessment or recording of pupil's attainment. The monitoring of teaching is to begin in the spring term. The coordinator's good pianoforte skills help to bring the music alive and add another dimension to the teaching. In assembly, pupils sang in unison and maintain good rhythm, but the control of diction and phrasing was less developed.

Singing is not characterised by great enthusiasm. Pupils are given opportunities to perform in front of a large group of pupils, and play a range of instruments. For example, a recorder group of 20 pupils played the hymn 'Come on and Celebrate', accompanied by the teacher on the pianoforte. Music is incorporated into seasonal performances and all pupils take part in the musical Christmas activities such as the musical 'Holy Joe'.

138. Good opportunities are provided to enhance the provision of music by way of extra-curricular lessons. There was a flourishing choir of 60 pupils in the last academic year and there are two recorder groups. There is a good peripatetic music service which has increased. Thirty eight pupils play a wide range of instruments such as keyboards, cornets, trombones, euphonium, tenor horns, guitars, violins and tuned and untuned percussion. Resources are good. There is a designated music room available to the peripatetic staff and also to all the classes, and instruments are available and accessible.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

139. There were no concerns highlighted in the last report and standards have been maintained. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are attaining standards appropriate for their age and in Key Stage 2 many pupils attain levels above that expected for their age. This reflects the importance placed on the subject by the school and the amount of time dedicated to it, which is above the average. It was only the second week of term and for most classes the lesson observed was the first one this term.
140. Progress is good overall in both key stages. There is no significant difference between the progress of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by staff and they make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment.
141. In Year 1, pupils develop sound coordination, awareness of space and demonstrate increasing control when moving and catching. By Year 2, they consolidate their movement skills, for example when moving changing speed and direction. They can link movements and keep going for suitable periods. The least confident pupils, who are often timid in their movement, are becoming more assertive. Pupils in Key Stage 2 build on the skills already developed. In Year 3, pupils develop their ball control soundly by practicing their throwing, bouncing and catching. Year 4 pupils extend their movement skills by developing their responses to balancing challenges for example, they support their weight in a variety of ways whilst travelling on the floor at various levels. By Year 6, pupils practice and improve their passing and receiving skills in netball. Pupils work safely in pairs, show confidence when demonstrating to the class and they make constructive criticisms. Furthermore, higher and average attaining pupils make gains in controlling their movement whilst focusing on the shape of their body; they clearly increased the fluency of their movement and confidently start to build sequences.
142. Attitudes overall are good. The pupils concentrate hard to follow instructions, and plan their own work. They are confident to perform in front of the class. They work well collaboratively and offer positive support to one another. The older pupils show independence and responsibility when getting out apparatus.

143. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. In the lessons seen, the teaching was always at least satisfactory in both key stages, good in 40 per cent of lessons and very good in 25 per cent. All teachers plan adequately to include warm up, performance and cool down. They give due attention to health and safety considerations and ensure that pupils are reminded about safety rules, for example, getting out and using equipment safely. Pupils are used extensively to demonstrate skills. Lessons are managed well and a particularly good technique is the use of a tambourine to focus pupils' attention. In the very good lessons for example, in Year 4 and 6 gymnastic lessons, the teachers expect high standards of behaviour and performance from pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are strong in assessing pupils and making relevant teaching points. When pupils are used to demonstrate good practice the teacher focuses other pupils' attention on why a particular shape or movement is good. This ensures pupils are aware of what they are trying to achieve and helps them improve their own performance.
144. The coordinator provides appropriate support for staff and the school organises a range of out of school activities that enhances the curriculum for pupils. The school has very good facilities and resources are good. However, there is no effective system to assess or record pupils' attainment. The physical education curriculum is enhanced for older pupils by a good range of extra-curricular football, netball, cricket, athletics, and opportunities to take part in competitions with other schools. These are well organised by all members of staff and high proportions of pupils enthusiastically take part.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

145. Four religious education lessons were observed. Judgements are based on those lesson observations and on analysis of planning and previous work. Standards of attainment are satisfactory at the end of key stages. Pupils' attainment meets expectations, for their age, of the locally agreed syllabus. By the time they leave school, the pupils have a satisfactory factual knowledge of Christianity and other world religions.
146. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about parables such as 'The Lost Son' and stories from the Old and New Testaments. They think carefully about the things that make them sad and then consider what sort of things might make God sad. When working on a topic about materials they examine the turban worn by Sikhs and so gain an early understanding of different beliefs and traditions. Pupils in Year 3 continue their study of the Bible, not only reading bible stories but also gaining an understanding of the number of books in the two sections of the Christian Bible. They expand their knowledge of other faiths including Judaism. In a topic on 'water', pupils read bible stories related to water and also find out about the significance to Muslims of washing before prayer. They compare the festive food associated with Christmas with rituals associated with Jewish food. At the end of Key Stage 2 when pupils are in Year 6 they learn through research about important figures such as Dr Barnado and Mother Teresa. In their study of Victorian religion they look at philanthropists such as George Cadbury, William Gladstone and the development of the Salvation Army. They extend their knowledge of other faiths by looking in more detail at the traditions of the Sikh faith.
147. The pupils are well motivated and enjoy the subject. They show respect for their own and other religions. They listen well and are keen to answer questions and offer opinions. They work effectively on individual tasks and in group and class activities. Relationships are mature and productive. Attitudes to learning overall are good but occasionally a small minority of pupils disrupt occasional lessons.

148. The quality of teaching is good overall. In the lessons seen all the teaching was at least satisfactory, being good in 50 per cent and very good in 25 per cent of the lessons. Teachers' planning is linked with the locally agreed syllabus and lessons are frequently planned to link with topic work. In a year 4 lesson on the theme of 'right and wrong' the teacher immediately captured the pupils' attention by distributing sweets unfairly amongst the class. This provoked a meaningful discussion where pupils explored the fairness of their own lifestyle compared with that of children in Third World Countries. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 respond well to the brisk pace of the lesson on signs and symbols and increase their understanding through discussion of the significance of Harvest Festivals. The school, class and department assemblies relate to the religious theme of the term. As a result of assemblies during the week of inspection, pupils are preparing to help less fortunate people in Eastern Europe in a practical way, by donating dried foods that can withstand the lorry journey to those countries.
149. Religious education contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the content of the lessons, which extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures and beliefs. Pupils' literacy skills are further developed through the subject through extended writing and reading for research. Religious education was not reported on at the time of the last inspection. The coordinator is in the process of consulting staff about the implications of the new syllabus and plans to rewrite the existing scheme of work in line with staff recommendations. The resources are adequate for the subject and money has been allocated to update the existing stock.