

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOSEPH'S R C PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hillcrest Road, Dudley

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103842

Headteacher: Mr D Cody

Reporting inspector: Mr J Morris
23696

Dates of inspection: 30 October – 2 November 2000

Inspection number: 224852

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Hillcrest Road
Dudley
West Midlands

Postcode: DY2 7PW

Telephone number: 01384 818925

Fax number: 01384 818930

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Mary Rowe

Date of previous inspection: 21st May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr J Morris 23696	Registered inspector	Science Music Special educational needs	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed?
Mr J Horwood 9189	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr D W Watson 23494	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs E Korn 14732	Team inspector	English Art Design and technology Foundation stage	How well are pupils taught?
Mr G Rayner 10817	Team Inspector	Information and communication technology Geography History Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes values and personal development

The inspection contractor was:

PkR Educational Consultants Ltd
6 Sherman Road
Bromley
Kent
BR1 3JH

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The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Joseph's is an average-sized, voluntary-aided Roman Catholic primary school. It is situated near to the centre of Dudley in the West Midlands. Sixty children attend the nursery part-time and there are 199 full-time pupils up to the age of 11. There are 171 pupils of compulsory school age. Five per cent of the pupils have English as an additional language. Ten per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is below the national average. Twenty-seven per cent of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. This is higher than the previous three years and above the national average. Attainment on entry to the nursery is below average.

A serious fire in August 1999, resulted in extensive damage to the school buildings and loss of resources. For more than a full school year, the staff and children have experienced great disruption to established routines and working conditions. For example, the school hall had to be used as a classroom so that there were no whole-school assemblies or indoor physical education lessons and the very recently opened information and communication technology (ICT) room was destroyed. By the time of this inspection the school's accommodation had been restored and the new library was in use but the new ICT room was not.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Joseph's, Dudley is a good school. In its exceptional circumstances, it is to the great credit of the school staff and parents that the pupils achieved the results they did in the national tests in 2000. Standards are generally good. Teaching is good overall. Leadership and management are good. Although unit costs are very high, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the age of 11.
- The quality of teaching is good overall. The key skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well.
- The newly appointed headteacher and deputy headteacher are providing good leadership and management to the work of the school.
- The provision for children in the nationally new Foundation Stage, which includes the nursery and reception, is very good.
- The school has a good ethos. Most of the pupils enjoy school and they have good attitudes to learning. There is a very friendly, welcoming atmosphere in the school. The very good relationships are characterised by mutual care and respect.

What could be improved

- The provision for ICT is unsatisfactory and standards are below expectations.
- The school does not fully meet the needs of different groups of pupils, particularly those with behavioural difficulties, those with English as an additional language, and the most able.
- Staff with key responsibilities do not carry out rigorously enough monitoring of the quality of teaching and the school's curriculum.
- The provision for the pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory and does not adequately raise pupils' awareness of the diverse nature of the world at large.

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 May 1996. Overall improvement has been satisfactory. There have been good improvements in the constitution and role of the school governors. Improvement on other issues raised at the time of the last inspection varies from good to unsatisfactory. The school has experienced considerable changes in staffing in the past two years. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed in the past year and there are new co-ordinators for each key stage. There are two newly qualified teachers in the school. The school is well placed to move forward and improve.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The table shows that standards were above average in English, mathematics and science in 2000 both in comparison with national figures and similar schools (based on the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals). Standards achieved by seven year-olds in 2000 are above average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing. Throughout the school standards have broadly followed the national upward trend following a significant dip in 1996. There is greater variation in the results from year to year in English than in mathematics or science. Analysis of the school's results between 1996 and 1999 shows some variation between the performance of boys and girls. Nationally girls do better than boys in primary schools. Although it is not statistically significant there are some variations in the school's results and, for example, girls do not do as well as boys in writing at age seven and mathematics at age 11. The school has not analysed available information rigorously enough to try to explain these differences.

At the time of the inspection pupils in Year 2 were not making good enough progress because of staff absence. Pupils do not achieve the expected standards in ICT other than in word processing because they have not had sufficient learning experiences.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils are happy at school and are very polite and friendly. Apart from a small number of pupils, most of whom are in one class, pupils are keen to learn, contribute well to discussions and work hard on set tasks.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most of the pupils are well behaved during lessons and around the school. The behaviour of a small number of pupils in one class causes significant disruption to learning.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Younger children settle into school routines quickly. Older pupils are mature and responsible. Most of the pupils form very good relationships with other pupils and adults.
Attendance	Broadly in line with the national average with a low rate of unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

During the inspection 48 lessons were graded for the quality of teaching. Ninety-four per cent were satisfactory or better, sixty-nine per cent were good or better and twenty-nine per cent were very good or better. Six per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory.

During the inspection the teaching of English was good and the teaching of mathematics satisfactory. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been fully implemented and the key skills of reading, writing and number are often reinforced well in other subjects. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and nearly all lessons include high quality whole-class activities. Teachers present accurate information and ask challenging questions. Pupils listen well and use previous learning well in new work.

Teachers do not pay enough attention in their planning to the needs of the more able pupils and, although they make satisfactory progress, these pupils are sometimes insufficiently stretched in their learning. There is some variation in the school's teaching of pupils with special educational needs. Those pupils who have clearly identified targets in literacy and are taught in part outside the classroom make good progress. The school does not have a clear enough strategy for dealing with very challenging behaviour. Consequently, pupils with behavioural difficulties do not make sufficient progress; the written guidance for temporary teachers is inadequate and this sometimes has an adverse effect on the learning of other pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is generally broad, balanced and relevant. It does not teach all of the required aspects of ICT but it does teach all other subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities in the Foundation stage, teaches Italian from age seven to 11 and swimming each year.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall but ranging from good to unsatisfactory. The school follows the recommendations of the national Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. There are often good targets for pupils with learning difficulties, particularly in literacy, and they receive good support. The approach to pupils with behavioural difficulties is inconsistent and this is partly due to inadequate support from external services.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The needs of these pupils have been met adequately on an individual basis. However, the school does not have a specific policy for these pupils or carefully analyse their progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The provision for the pupils' spiritual and social development is good and it is very good for their moral development. Although the school teaches Italian to all pupils from age seven and other beliefs in religious education, overall the provision for the pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory. Opportunities to increase pupils' awareness and understanding of the cultural diversity are missed, particularly in art and music.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Overall the school cares for pupils well on day-to-day basis. There is a strong family atmosphere. The procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress and use of this information are satisfactory.

The school has a good partnership with the parents. Parents have supported the school well through a very difficult period. They feel confident to approach the school with concerns or problems.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and co-ordinators for the key stages are all very new to these posts but are all long-serving members of staff so they know the school well. There is a clear basis for future developments with a good educational focus.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. This is very much improved since the previous inspection. The actions of the governors are now informed by properly constituted committees which support and question different aspects of the school's work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school development plan identifies appropriate priorities and the school sets clear targets. The analysis of available information about pupils' achievements is not rigorous enough.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Specific grants are used for the stated purpose. Even allowing for the recent difficulties, insufficient use has been made of available resources in ICT.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. The school makes good use of the local authority's financial support services and applies the principles of best value satisfactorily.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is approachable • Their child likes school • The school has high expectations • The school helps their child become more mature and responsible • The teaching is good • Their child makes good progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework • Information about their child's progress • Activities outside lessons • Behaviour • Partnership with parents • The leadership and management • Their child's progress

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views of the school. The inspectors share the parents' concern about the behaviour of some pupils and the effect that this has on the learning of others. Parents have strongly expressed their views to the school governors. Homework is satisfactory overall but inconsistent from class to class. The school provides a satisfactory range of activities outside lessons including a residential experience for all pupils in Years 5 and 6 who wish to go. The school has a good working partnership with most of the parents and gives them very good general information. However, annual reports do not contain enough specific information about individual pupil's progress and what they need to do next. Leadership and management are good and improving.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The standards achieved in English, mathematics and science by 11-year-olds in the National Curriculum tests this year are above average in comparison with national averages and with similar schools (based on the percentage of pupils eligible for school meals). The standards achieved by seven-year-olds are above average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing compared with national figures. In relation to similar schools, they are average in reading, below average in writing and above average in mathematics. Comparison of the results of the same group of pupils, who were seven years old in 1996 and 11 years old in 2000, show that the school has enabled these pupils to make very significant gains in their learning over four years. These judgements are based on calculations made by the headteacher and registered inspector using Ofsted's autumn package for analysis of national assessments.
2. Standards were reported to be good throughout the school when it was last inspected in May 1996, primarily based on the results of tests in 1995. However, the school results in 1996 were the lowest recorded and, following a marked upturn in 1997, standards have risen broadly in line with the national trend of improvement, particularly at age 11.
3. At the time of this inspection, attainment was average in English at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. In mathematics and science it was average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. The link between teaching and learning is very clear. Long-term staff absence and poor behaviour of some pupils were having a significant impact on standards in Year 2 at the time of the inspection. With this exception, children and pupils throughout the school generally make satisfactory progress across the curriculum and good progress in English, mathematics and science. This is because the teaching is consistently good and the implementation of the national initiatives in literacy and numeracy is having a positive impact on teaching and learning in these key areas. There is some variation in the standards of writing and the way in which pupils present their work. This is in part due to inconsistencies in the teachers' expectations of writing expressed through their verbal feedback to pupils and their written comments on pupils' work.
4. The school staff achieved a great success in maintaining standards in general during a very difficult period of more than a year. The then very new ICT room and resources were lost in the fire and the school hall had to be used as a classroom. It is clear that ICT and physical education activities were severely hampered by these events. Whole-school assemblies were not possible. Standards in ICT are understandably below expectations. However, insufficient use has been made of available computers in classrooms and this judgement is supported by the variable use of computers observed during the inspection week. In some classes this was very minimal indeed. A new ICT suite was very close to being put into use at the time of the inspection.
5. There are some variations in the performance of boys and girls. Girls do better than boys at primary school nationally. In this school, differences are often minimal and boys sometimes do better than girls. Although they are still above the national average, on the results between 1996 and 1999 it is possible that girls are underachieving in writing at age seven and mathematics at age 11. The school has not carried out sufficient analysis to try to explain variations in whole-school results or the performance of different groups of pupils. For example, English results were below the national average in 1999. It is difficult to explain this as a result of the overall ability of that particular group of pupils when they achieved above average results in mathematics and science.
6. Children enter the nursery with a below average level of attainment with many having particular difficulties in basic literacy or numeracy skills or in their social development. The consistently

very good teaching in the nursery and reception results in most of the children achieving or exceeding the expectations of the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1 and start the National Curriculum. Children are above the Dudley local authority average when tested using a standardised baseline assessment early in the reception year and are broadly in line with national averages at age six.

7. Pupils with special educational needs generally progress at a similar rate to their peers. Those who receive support outside the classroom often make good progress in literacy. There is no school-based data on the attainment of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds at the end of either key stage and therefore their attainment when compared with national standards cannot be judged. During the inspection, however, due to the quality of the teaching that the majority of them received, this particular group of pupils achieved standards in line with their peers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Attitudes to school and behaviour in lessons are good. They are often very good in lessons in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2. The children are friendly and polite. They have very good relationships with all adults and with each other. The youngest children are developing good social skills. They work well together, move purposely around the classroom from one task to another, listen carefully to teachers and to each other and are good at waiting their turn. They enjoy their work and are able to remain interested and involved in their tasks for sustained periods. Although many children in Key Stage 1 are enthusiastic about their work and respond to it in ways that strongly support their learning, the unsatisfactory behaviour of some pupils in Year 2 has an adverse effect on learning. On a number of occasions during the inspection, noisy talk and inappropriate behaviour by some children meant that planned activities, including discussions, did not achieve intended outcomes. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have good levels of maturity and responsibility and exercise very high initiative when given the opportunity. They use their time well, are good at organising themselves for work and maintain a good focus on their tasks. They respond enthusiastically and thoughtfully when asked for ideas, often asking intelligent questions of their own.
9. Behaviour around the school is generally good. Movement at playtime and lunch-time is very orderly and children show proper respect when using the library and other resources. There have been reported incidences of misbehaviour in the playground, but these have been addressed well by the school and behaviour outdoors was good during the inspection. During wet weather, pupils generally act responsibly in their classrooms, often getting on with unfinished work, sometimes using computers, playing board games, reading, or enjoying conversations with other children.
10. Although pupils respond very well when given responsibility, there are few organised opportunities for them to hold responsible positions, or to make decisions about the running of their school. One very good opportunity is provided for older children who run the school bank with considerable commitment and efficiency.

11. There is a very low incidence of bullying and children are confident that the school will deal swiftly and fully with any that does occur. The family ethos that is fundamental to the school's mission has a clear impact on relationships in classes, for younger children especially, which provide very secure and caring environments. Children from different cultural backgrounds are treated with respect and well integrated into the school. In Year 6 music and religious education activities, the contribution of children who could provide and talk about examples from their own culture was highly valued by other pupils.
12. The rate of attendance is broadly in line with the average for primary schools. The level of unauthorised absences is low. The school has successfully maintained these levels of attendance every year since the last inspection. Attendance levels were maintained well during the period following the fire when the environment was less pleasant. Exclusions are very rare.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The standard of teaching is good overall. Similarly to the previous report, 70 per cent of the lessons seen were good or better. Six per cent of unsatisfactory lessons were seen, compared with twelve per cent in the previous inspection, and these lessons were all in Year 2 and Year 3. The teaching of the youngest children in the nursery and reception classes, now called the Foundation Stage, was consistently very good. The teaching of pupils aged six to seven (Key Stage 1) was satisfactory overall. 11 per cent of the teaching was good and this good teaching was in Year 1. The teaching of pupils aged seven to 11 (Key Stage 2) was good overall, with 33 per cent of the teaching seen being very good. Examples of good teaching were seen in most subjects. Teaching in Year 6 was consistently good or very good.
14. Since the previous inspection, the nursery and reception classes have combined into the Foundation Stage of education. Planning is to the new Early Learning Goals for these two classes and there is a consistency of approach in both classes which helps the children to feel secure and therefore flourish. Co-ordination of the Foundation Stage is good.
15. The co-ordinators for Key Stages 1 and 2 have provided an effective lead to the implementation of consistent planning by class teachers but the impact of this good work has been restricted by long-term staff absences in two classes. Planning throughout both these key stages is satisfactory apart from the use of information and computer technology. Supply teachers are still unfamiliar with the pupils and their previous work and this highlights the need within the school to have more supportive systems for temporary teachers and precise records of the pupils and their previous work.
16. In the Foundation Stage, teachers have a very secure understanding of the curriculum and how young children learn. They provide a consistently well-organised and stimulating environment enabling children to make good progress, particularly in their concentration, self-confidence and independence. Teachers and support staff show respect for each other and for the children and have very good relationships with the children. The staff work well as a team and they all contribute significantly to the detailed assessments that take place in these classes. Teachers have high expectations. They know exactly what they expect the children to learn or experience and the adult interventions in these activities, particularly in the nursery class, effectively extend the children's learning. Teachers have good strategies for managing the class. They effectively teach the basic skills and are providing a good foundation for future learning.
17. Teaching in Years 2 and 3 has been disrupted by long-term staff absences and this has contributed to the slow progress and the lower attainment found particularly at the end of Key Stage 1. Considering these conditions there is a remarkable consistency in the teaching found in the school. There is an attitude of mutual respect by teachers in classrooms throughout the school and this leads to the development of good work habits and attitudes by most pupils.
18. Throughout the school, teachers have good skills for leading discussions and through skilful questioning they frequently challenge pupils and thereby extend their thinking and

understanding. There is this element of dialogue and reflection in most classrooms and lessons and consequently pupils' learning is extended in all areas of the curriculum. This constant verbal stimulation and dialogue is a major strength within the school and a contributory factor towards the progress pupils make and the good standards of speaking and listening found in Year 6.

19. Most lessons challenge pupils, particularly during the planned introduction. Plenary sessions at the end of the lesson are usually effectively used to consolidate learning. Teachers often use this part of the lesson to increase pupils' self-esteem by giving them the opportunity to show to others their successfully completed work. In many of the good lessons seen, teachers grade the tasks they set and match them to the ability of the pupils. However, the use of assessment materials is not yet sufficiently refined and teachers rarely set individual targets for pupils. Setting these targets would raise attainment by increasing the challenge for the more able pupils and giving more specific support to the less able members of the class.
20. Teachers have high expectations in most aspects of the pupils' work, such as pace of work and accuracy, but their expectations of handwriting and presentation are often not high enough, particularly in the middle classes of the school. Where the teaching is good, teachers have good subject knowledge and their lessons are lively and interesting and pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. At other times, activities lack challenge for many pupils in the class or are ineffectual holding activities with little purpose.
21. Teachers teach the basic skills well. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy well and teaching is effective because lessons are well planned and taught with a suitable degree of challenge. In Key Stage 2, in particular, there were several examples of these strategies raising standards. In Year 4 the teaching of literacy was very good. In the context of comparing two poems, through skilful linking of ideas and through a range of activities including music, this teacher raised pupils' knowledge and understanding to a very high level.
22. Marking is satisfactory overall but there is considerable variation between teachers. Most work is marked but often this is little more than a tick. Only in the oldest class in the school are comments consistently written which help pupils by indicating the strengths within their work and how they can improve.
23. Support staff are not consistently actively engaged while the class teacher works with all the pupils. At times, particularly for pupils age six and seven, the work support staff provide is not sufficiently well matched or supervised to ensure that the needs of all the pupils are met, particularly those of the lowest ability.
24. The management of pupils' behaviour is good overall. Teachers settle their classes to work quickly and have clear and suitably high expectations. The behaviour of pupils is best when teachers are explicit about how they expect pupils to behave, quickly capture the imagination of the class and set challenging and engrossing tasks. Parents expressed a concern about the behaviour in some classes in the school. The school's behaviour policy and guidelines are not sufficiently enforced by or supportive to all teachers, particularly for some of those new into the school. Consequently, in a small number of lessons in Year 2, the behaviour of a minority of the class restricted the teacher's ability to maintain the planned learning for the whole lesson.
25. Homework in the form of reading is given to the younger pupils in the school and this is well supported by the parents. Parents expressed concern about homework and in particular about the link between the homework set and the teaching in the class. The inspection found a good range of homework tasks set in Year 6, extending many areas of the curriculum taught in the classroom. Study skills such as the use of the computer and the Internet for research are developed well and pupils are effectively prepared for the demands of their secondary education.

In the other classes of the school no homework was seen during the inspection and pupils are not given opportunities to develop the skill of working independently.

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

26. The quality and range of the curriculum offered to pupils in the school is unsatisfactory overall, although what is offered in the Foundation Years is good. In the Foundation Years children have a stimulating and very well organised curriculum that has a positive impact on their learning. The children have their learning carefully monitored and recorded by very competent teachers and support staff. This information is regularly used to ensure that the needs of all children are fully met.
27. In Key Stages 1 and 2, however, the school does not fully meet the statutory requirements for the teaching of information and communication technology. It does teach all other subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Far too little (ICT) is taught, and the range of materials available and number of learning experiences in design and technology in Key Stage 1 and in art throughout the school are barely adequate. Therefore, although the curriculum is generally broad, balanced and relevant there are some significant shortcomings. The fire in 1999 had a devastating impact on the school's ability to provide sufficient learning opportunities in ICT and physical education. In this sense the curricular provision has deteriorated since the last inspection, but these are exceptional circumstances and the school has maintained high standards in many areas of its work. At the time of this inspection, the school hall was back in use for physical education activities and a new ICT room very nearly ready for use. The provision of a 10-week swimming course for all pupils each year and the teaching of Italian to all Key Stage 2 pupils enrich the curriculum. The school pays due regard to both sex and drugs education. These areas are taught through science topics on healthy living that give due consideration to the Catholic mission of the school. The school has very recently adopted the new national guidelines for teaching all the National Curriculum subjects.
28. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall but there is considerable variation. The school carefully follows the national Code of Practice for these pupils and identifies pupils with difficulties well. All pupils at Stage 2 or higher on the register of special educational needs have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Good support is provided outside the classroom for pupils with significant difficulties in literacy and these pupils make good progress. Apart from literacy and behaviour, there are no pupils identified as having specific needs in other areas of their learning or as having a particular talent and this is surprising. A range of worthwhile strategies and techniques have been tried with pupils who present very challenging behaviours and advice has been sought from Educational Psychologists and the local education authority's behaviour management support team. In some cases, the response from the Educational Psychology service has been too slow, especially to requests for formal statementing procedures. The school has a satisfactory approach to managing behaviour and in most classes this successfully resolves minor incidents. However, the written policy and guidelines are not detailed and clear enough. Consequently, when pupils present significantly challenging behaviour the school does not have an effective mechanism to produce written programmes that are easily understood by all staff, particularly temporary teachers, and the pupils themselves.
29. There is little guidance in any of the school policies on how to support pupils for whom English is an additional language. The school reacts to those pupils who arrive in school after the age of five by providing support from the Local Education Authority. There is no distinct school based provision or adaptation of the curriculum to meet the needs of these pupils.
30. The school has adopted and effectively implemented both the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Their introduction has had a positive impact on the standards achieved in most areas

of the national assessment tests. Standards in writing, however, have not consistently followed this trend.

31. The school provides satisfactory equality of opportunity. Individual teachers are good at ensuring that all children participate fully in the opportunities that they provide. The school makes considerable efforts to ensure that pupils will not be excluded from extra-curricular activities due to financial circumstances. The school's Equal Opportunities Policy provides much helpful guidance on important aspects that teachers must consider and general information on how to ensure equality of opportunity. However, the school's systems do not fully ensure that the policy's stated purposes will always be achieved. The school is not systematically assessing and identifying pupils of higher ability and with English as an additional language, or analysing the information that they already have on these pupils.
32. The school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities to support learning. There are three sports clubs held regularly for Key Stage 2 pupils. There is a school choir and there are recorder groups. The school is endeavouring to improve the number of extra-curricular activities through the use of 'Sports Link' (a commercially run after-school sports club) and the introduction of a dance club this term. All pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to benefit from a residential visit to the Frank Chapman Centre.
33. The school has strong links with the local parish and this is central to the school's ethos of fostering a caring community. There are regular visitors in the school, such as the emergency services, artists and actors. These visitors make an important contribution to the school's drugs awareness programme. The school organises a good range of visits to develop work in the classroom, such as to the zoo for younger children and to a Tudor manor house for older pupils. There are limited connections with the wider culturally diverse community. The school participates in regular sporting events with the local secondary school. Years 5 and 6 visit the secondary schools to ease their transition to the next stage of their education. There are, however, few opportunities for the staff of local schools to meet to discuss curricular and educational issues and compare what they are doing with the work of others.
34. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The development of pupils' spiritual awareness is good and that of moral development is very good. These are both strengths of the school and have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils are given numerous opportunities to pray during the course of the day and the practice of reflecting on their effort and completed work is a common feature of the good teaching. The importance of spirituality is identified in subject policy documentation, such as history, although little of this link was observed in lessons during the inspection. The aspect of spirituality that values and respects the beliefs and practices of others needs to be developed. Lessons in all subjects and assemblies regularly reinforce the values of honesty and fairness. Moral issues that concern the modern world about society and the environment are discussed in geography and English.
35. The provision for the social development of pupils is good. The majority of pupils in the school accept the set of basic school rules and a few classes have supplemented these by their own class rules. The quality of relationships in the school is very good and is a strength. Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in the upper end of Key Stage 2 are actively encouraged to become independent both in their learning and in organising themselves. A wider social awareness is developed through participating in local sports competitions, musical events and attending the local day care centre for the elderly. There are many opportunities within classes for pupils to take responsibility for classroom organisation. There are, however, only a few examples of wider school responsibilities such as 'Play Pals', where Year 6 pupils play with Key Stage 1 pupils at break times, and the school bank. There are few whole-school responsibilities for pupils as they progress through the school and there are no clear mechanisms to allow the pupils to express their collective views or take on responsible roles, such as a school council.

36. The provision for the development of pupils' cultural understanding and awareness is unsatisfactory. In the study of the local area in geography, the 'Black Country' in history and Shakespeare in English, pupils are made aware of some of their own heritage. However, opportunities are missed in other subjects such as English, art, music and ICT to develop the pupils' knowledge and appreciation of the diversity of British culture and the world at large. Subject policies, such as science, note the importance of culture but they offer no advice on how this can be incorporated into lessons. The Diwali display and related books on Hinduism offer a brief insight into different religions and cultures, as did the very good Year 6 lesson on comparing classical, rock, Indian and African music. The school is not adequately preparing its pupils to live in a fast changing multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The provision for the welfare of the pupils is good. It is underpinned by the strong ethos of the school and its links with the Catholic community. The family atmosphere within the school is characterised by the very good relationships within the school and the welcoming and polite way in which pupils greet each other, staff and visitors. The school family includes staff, parents, children and governors who are all clearly working together for the good of the school. The close relationships ensure that children are well known by the staff. There is a sound approach to health and safety and where there are any slight weaknesses the school is working actively to eliminate them. The school gates are closed during school hours to prevent danger from vehicles, and parents of the nursery children have to come into school to collect them. Activities throughout the school are adequately supervised.
38. The school has two trained first-aid staff who are supported by external agencies as required. All injuries are reported and accurate records are made and securely maintained. Procedures for child protection and health and safety checks are good and meet legal requirements. The Child Protection Officer is fully trained and conscientious in her duties ensuring that all staff are aware of the procedures and their role, including new staff as soon as they join the school.
39. The school has good procedures for monitoring attendance and ensures that parents are aware of the requirements to notify the school of absence as part of the home-school agreement. There are no major initiatives to improve the satisfactory attendance figures, which have been very similar for many years.
40. The arrangements for monitoring pupils' academic attainment and progress and personal development are satisfactory. This was an issue at the last inspection and satisfactory progress has been made since then. Since the new senior management team and the new Governing Body have been in place a revised policy on assessment has been put in place and this is having a positive effect. Due to the disruption of the recent major fire, appointment of new staff and absence due to illness, there is still some inconsistency across the school. The school carries out satisfactory analysis of available information from the national tests in English, mathematics and science and other standardised tests such as in reading. It does not analyse results carefully enough to fully explore differences in the performance of different groups of pupils such as boys and girls or pupils with English as an additional language or to try to explain variation in the results in writing tests. The best assessments are still being carried out in the early years. The Year 1 assessment files are a good example of informative recording of both academic achievement and personal development. All teachers are carrying out academic assessment with appropriate testing and monitoring but it is not yet integrated as a whole school system. The procedures need to be developed to ensure that the assessment is used to improve guidance for pupils and inform teachers' planning.
41. The school has satisfactory procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour for the majority of cases. They are not, however, adequate for managing more challenging behaviours because they do not give rise to written programmes which are helpful to pupils and staff. The school had started to develop its policy and practice with the

support of the local education authority's behaviour management support team. However, this had been suspended due to staff absences.

42. The overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There has been a recent increase in the number of children with special educational needs. Individual education plans often have good targets, particularly for literacy, and are used well by the support teacher when working with individuals or small groups outside the classroom. However, it is not always clear that class teachers are paying enough attention to these in their planning.
43. Individual one-off programmes have adequately met the needs of pupils who have, in the past, joined the school at an early stage of acquiring English. There is, however, no school policy on its provision for pupils with English as an additional language. The English policy provides limited guidance on assessing the needs of these pupils. The school does not monitor or analyse the attainment or learning of pupils with English as an additional language, or who are from ethnic minorities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The majority of parents are very positive about the school. They are extremely supportive but also very open about concerns on certain aspects of teaching and behaviour. Many have involvement with the school through the active support group, as parent governors, or by providing help in lessons or in other ways such as in the library. The majority of parents say that their children like coming to school and are making good progress as a result of good teaching. There were, however, significant concerns over the amount and effectiveness of supply teaching over recent years. The senior management team is very new but most parents consider that the management has significantly improved and that the school is well managed and led. There were mixed views about the quantity and type of homework although most agreed that the inconsistency was part of the supply teaching issue. Although most parents agreed that the school is very approachable and works closely with parents there were mixed views on how effectively they were kept informed on progress. Parents identified that there were isolated areas of very poor behaviour causing considerable concern.
45. During the inspection all the points raised by parents through the meeting and through questionnaires were examined. The team found that some were not an accurate reflection on the school's work and others are being addressed well. The inspectors share the parents concerns with regard to the very poor behaviour of a few children, the effect of staff absence on learning, and the quality of written progress reports.
46. There is an effective home-school partnership supported by a range of newsletters, an annual report and several meetings during the year. In addition there is an open door policy for parents to discuss matters with the school. Overall, the school provides good information to parents. The annual reports, however, are not of a uniform standard and contain limited quantitative information – some refer only to what has been done rather than how well it has been done and the acceptability of work. Whilst the opportunity exists to discuss the reports there would clearly be more opportunity for meaningful discussion if the report quality, presentation and quantitative content were improved and consistent across the school.
47. There has clearly been significant support from parents to overcome the effects of the recent fire by, for example, helping to refurbish, organise and catalogue the new library. A few parents help in classrooms and when they do they provide very effective additional support to the pupils. General support is frequently given in the nursery and a parent violinist made an excellent contribution to one lesson.
48. The school is an integral part of the Roman Catholic community and pupils are involved with reading at mass for example. Regular masses take place within the school and the priest is a regular visitor. The Parent Friends Association has regular meetings and organises social and

fund raising events, which involve the wider community and make a good contribution to life of the school.

49. Parents demonstrate their partnership with the school by good attendance at meetings. Most meetings with teachers have close to 100 per cent attendance and those who cannot attend have special appointments on alternative dates. The Annual Governors Meeting is traditionally attended by about 30 parents.
50. Parents of children with special educational needs receive additional information about their child's progress and teachers are readily available to discuss problems or concerns. Examples seen of testing, assessment and reporting to parents of two children with specific special educational needs were excellent.
51. There were some examples in the reading diaries of parents receiving good advice on how to help their children at home. Many pupils identified that they receive help and support from their parents in other ways. For example, they discuss their experiences in class following visits to historical places. Parental support for their children both at school and at home has a positive impact on the pupils' learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and key stage co-ordinators are all recently appointed but none of them are new to the school. They are already providing a clear educational direction and focus to the work of the school and the capacity for improvement is good. Together they have a good knowledge and understanding of the needs of the school's pupils and current educational initiatives.
53. There is a good ethos and the aims and values are reflected in the day-to-day life of the school. The aims are usefully grouped under the headings faith, academic, social and community. There are very good relationships and high expectations that all pupils will respect others, work hard and make good progress in their learning. The school is a friendly welcoming community with a family atmosphere and the doors are always open to parents and other visitors. Parents and, for example a recently retired teacher, are keen to help teachers in the classroom, with displays and in restoring the building after the fire, especially in the library.
54. There are co-ordinators for all subjects of the curriculum and in most cases they are implementing the separate action plans well. These are in place in every curriculum area and are part of the school improvement plan. Long-term absence was having a negative effect with regard to developments in music and art.
55. The work of the school's Governing Body is satisfactory, both in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities and in contributing to the management of change in the school. It is improving rapidly and there have been very significant improvements since the previous inspection. There are properly constituted committees which meet at appropriate intervals and report to the full body which meets at least once a school term. The finance and curriculum committees meet at least twice during most school terms. Governors are committed to improving the school through their close involvement in the production and monitoring of the school development plan. They have kept themselves informed of the major initiatives in literacy and numeracy and have clear plans to set targets for the headteacher and deputy headteacher as part of the new arrangements for performance management of all teachers.
56. There have been insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and curriculum planning to properly inform developments. There are good plans to increase this activity. Some literacy, numeracy and science lessons have been observed since Easter 2000 in accordance with these plans. There is a set timetable for the monitoring of teaching by members of the new senior management team and subject co-ordinators throughout the school year.
57. The school improvement plan identifies appropriate priorities for the period 2000-2002. It is a good tool for the implementation and management of change. Each of the five priority areas has well thought out targets and success criteria. Responsible individuals, timescales and costs are identified. The five priorities for this period are to do with:
- Improving assessment procedures and record keeping to ensure individual progress throughout the National Curriculum;
 - Maintaining and raising standards in English, mathematics and science;
 - Developing the school as a Christ-centred community;
 - Incorporating the new ICT equipment to have maximum impact on teaching and learning;
 - Full restoration of the school buildings and contents following the fire.
58. Specific grants are used in accordance with their stated purpose. The use of new technology throughout the school is unsatisfactory. Full use of the new ICT room and effective use of the New Opportunities Funding are appropriately identified as remedies for this shortcoming. Educational priorities are supported well by careful financial planning by the governors' finance committee and headteacher, good support from the local education authority and rigorous

monitoring of spending by the secretary. The school is largely reliant on the local education authority's support service and sometimes does not explore other possibilities sufficiently. Overall it applies the principles of best value satisfactorily.

59. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall. The accommodation and resources in the Foundation Stage are good. The Key Stage 2 library is a very good facility but the Key Stage 1 library does not have sufficient good quality books to fully meet the needs of all the pupils, especially the more able. The new ICT room will be an excellent facility when it is fully commissioned and used daily. There are good plans to develop the space surrounded by the school building.
60. Financial control and day-to-day administration are to a very high standard. The school secretary is extremely industrious and efficient. He is a lively character who makes visitors feel welcome, is the first point of contact for parents and has a keen personal interest in security. The school caretaker efficiently supervises the cleaning and maintenance of the building and grounds and is a key member of the lunch-time staff.
61. Although unit costs in 1999/2000 were very high, taking into account the quality of teaching and leadership, the standards achieved and the school ethos, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. *The headteacher, school governors and all staff with key responsibilities should:*

(1) Raise standards in information and communication technology (ICT) by:

- a. making better use of the computers available in the classrooms;
- b. timetable all classes to make best use of the excellent new ICT suite as soon as it is fully commissioned *;
- c. providing training for all classroom staff in the use of modern technology in the classroom and in other ways *.

(Paragraphs 4, 15, 27, 57-58, 92-93, 98, 111 and 121-123)

(2) Meet the needs of specific groups of pupils more effectively by:

- a. providing clear behaviour management programmes for pupils with challenging behaviours that are easily understood by the pupils themselves and all staff who work with them. Vigorously pursue support from available education or health agencies or independent consultants if necessary;
- b. review the whole school's approach to managing difficult behaviour and modify the school's policy in the light of any changes in practice *;
- c. where it is appropriate include targets for other areas of learning, particularly numeracy, as well as literacy in the individual education plans already in place for pupils with special educational needs;
- d. devise and implement a more structured approach to meeting the needs of pupils with English as an additional language;
- e. include more extension activities and encourage more independent learning for those pupils identified as being more able.

(Paragraphs 7, 15, 19-20, 24, 28-29, 31, 40-43, 86, 90, 98, 104, 114, 116-118 and 120)

(3) Carry out more frequent and more intensive monitoring of the teaching and the curriculum in their areas of responsibility by:

- a. observing lessons, working alongside colleagues, examining teachers' planning and examining pupils' work *;

- b. providing clear feedback to individual teachers and holding discussions with all relevant staff to make the findings of this monitoring widely known *;
- c. developing guidance and learning resources in accordance with the findings of this monitoring.

(Paragraphs 56 and 131)

- (4) Improve the school's provision for the pupils' cultural development by extending the range of learning experiences and opportunities that are planned to increase the pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own heritage, the multi-cultural nature of modern society and the world at large. This should involve the use of a broader range of art and music from around the world and more effective use of diverse content and labelling in display.

(Paragraphs 76, 106, 108 and 127)

* Targets relating to these issues are readily identifiable in the school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	27	40	25	4	2	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)	30	199
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	NA	23

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	59

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.3
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
	2000	13	14	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	11
	Girls	12	13	13
	Total	22	23	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (84)	85 (94)	92 (88)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	13
	Girls	12	9	13
	Total	22	20	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (94)	74 (88)	96 (91)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	89 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	15	12	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	11	14
	Girls	11	10	12
	Total	24	21	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (81)	78 (81)	96 (88)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	14
	Girls	11	10	12
	Total	23	23	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (85)	85 (85)	96 (85)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	8
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	146
Any other minority ethnic group	12

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	2	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)	8.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.6
Average class size	33.2

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	141

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	30

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

Number of pupils per FTE adult	15
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	413742
Total expenditure	424495
Expenditure per pupil	1866
Balance brought forward from previous year	15728
Balance carried forward to next year	4975

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate = 27%

Number of questionnaires sent out	229
Number of questionnaires returned	62

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	19	3	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	40	10	5	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	34	21	6	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	39	23	8	3
The teaching is good.	45	42	6	5	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	34	24	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	35	3	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	32	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	40	13	5	3
The school is well led and managed.	52	27	13	3	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	40	6	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	29	19	19	5

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

63. Since the previous inspection the high standards found in the nursery class have been maintained and those in the reception class have improved resulting in the teaching for children in the newly formed Foundation Stage being consistently very good. New planning towards achieving the Early Learning Goals has been implemented and the reception and nursery class work closely together. The nursery now takes children from the age of three years. The teaching area of the reception class has been extended into the corridor to give good additional facilities and a spacious learning environment for the class. There is now a consistency of approach to the teaching and curriculum in both classes which helps these young children up to the age of six feel secure and therefore enables them to flourish.
64. Children join the nursery for a half-day following their third birthday and join the reception class for a full day in the September prior to their fifth birthday. Most children in the reception class have transferred from the nursery. At the time of the inspection, there were 29 children in the morning sessions and 19 children in the afternoon sessions of the nursery. More children are expected to enter the nursery in January bringing the numbers up to 30 in both sessions and the nursery will then be full. There are 30 children in the reception class selected in accordance with the school's admissions criteria.
65. The nursery and reception classes are both integral within the school, but are not immediately next to each other. The nursery uses a secure and self-contained small outdoor play area with a soft surface. The reception class mostly play in the school playground. There is some movement of children from both groups between these areas. The inside of the nursery class is well decorated with a wide range of children's work and the teaching areas are well organised and provide a spacious and stimulating learning environment. The reception class has access to a wide corridor which is used well for sand, water and dough play, painting and domestic role-play activities. The classroom is bright and is decorated by many very good displays, including the children's own work. This organisation and presentation results in the children receiving a consistently good range of learning experiences in both classes and shows them that the adults value their work.
66. There is a good induction process for children entering the nursery and at this time parents contribute to the thorough recording systems used in the class. The nursery is currently trialling the 'Dudley Foundation Stage Entry Profile', which is an assessment system for use throughout the Foundation Stage and which can be used to indicate children's attainment on entry and measure their progress. There are good arrangements for transfer from the nursery to reception and this includes the nursery nurse moving with the children. Nursery records are transferred to the reception class and these together with observations are used to initially group the children on entry to the reception year. The Dudley entry or baseline assessments are completed within six weeks of children entering the reception class and these are used to refine and reassess these groupings and they help the reception teacher to get to know the children quickly.
67. Children enter the nursery with below average levels of attainment and they enter the reception class with attainment above the Dudley average. Children leave the reception class achieving all the Early Learning Goals. The most able children exceed expectations in aspects of number work and writing and they are above average in many aspects of their social, personal and emotional development. This represents very good progress throughout the two years of the Foundation Stage where children are well prepared for the National Curriculum. The records transferred to the Year 1 class are used well and there is a satisfactory transfer between these two classes.

68. Good use is made of external agencies to support the many children who join the nursery with significant special educational needs. Class teachers and all other available adults support them well, so that these children make good progress, similar to the other children in the class. The nursery intake includes a growing number of children with English as an additional language. These children are not provided with specialist language support by Dudley Education Authority and their satisfactory progress is due to the stimulating learning environment of the nursery and the good use made of a bilingual student rather than planned specialist provision.
69. A feature of the nursery and reception class is the good relationships between all staff and between the staff and the children. There is a climate of mutual respect which enables children to flourish and to develop a positive self-image and attitude to their learning.

Personal Social and Emotional Development

70. Many children enter the nursery with a low level of personal, social and emotional development. Adults provide a good start for social development by providing a range of activities which give children opportunities to learn how to work alongside others, to share and take turns and to improve concentration. Many opportunities are provided for children to make choices in order to develop their independence in learning and confidence to explore. Positive attitudes such as sharing equipment, considering the needs of others and wanting to achieve their tasks are effectively transmitted to the children. The most able children talk about their play clearly and in considerable detail, using their imagination to extend the activity as they work.

Language Literacy and Communication

71. All adults involved with the children in the nursery and the reception class work hard to develop children's language skills and by the age of five the Early Learning Goals are achieved. Many children have a poor ability to interact and to talk with others when they enter the nursery. Staff approach children as they play and in a non-threatening and non-disruptive manner discuss the activity with the child. In this way spoken language is effectively developed so that children who have been in the nursery for some time hold conversations with each other and with adults as they work. In the reception class opportunities are extended and children speak in front of the class for a range of reasons, developing their spoken language, their ability to reflect on previous experiences and their confidence.
72. At the age of three some children show an enjoyment of stories and listen with obvious pleasure. By the age of four, they select and browse a book, listen to taped stories and enjoy and concentrate well when the teacher reads them stories. They are encouraged to participate in the repetitive elements within stories and do so with humour and enthusiasm. The class teacher has many good strategies to focus their attention on the print within stories and to develop their sight vocabulary, knowledge of the alphabet and of simple phonics, so that by the end of the year many children are well established on the school's reading scheme.
73. Children's ability to control a pencil develops steadily and they are given many opportunities to select from a range of writing materials. Children progress from making rather uncontrolled marks on paper at age three and by the age of four many can apply colour accurately within lines. Children are taught how to form letters correctly and by the end of the reception year many children are able to form letters with considerable control and precision and the most able have been taught to write short sentences and to include a full stop at the end.

Mathematics

74. From the time when they enter the nursery, children are introduced to counting rhymes and counting everyday objects. Children make steady progress with this aspect of their learning. Through skilful teaching nursery children are helped to sort objects and to name and identify

properties of flat shapes so that more able children use language such as ‘a small red triangle’ spontaneously. There is a wide range of ability in the reception year. Some children are starting to make comparisons of size and can confidently count a group of six children while others have difficulty counting to four. By the end of the Foundation Stage most children can count to ten and the most able are counting well beyond this number and are familiar with simple addition.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

75. The range of opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world is very good. For example, teaching in the nursery develops children’s knowledge of the needs of living things as they feed the goldfish together, and makes children gasp with delight as they look through a strong magnifying glass or see a lit pumpkin lantern. In these ways children are helped to look carefully, to explore and to see patterns. Teachers provide a broad range of experiences and make learning special through their explanations and demonstrations. In the reception year adults introduce children to a range of materials and tools including those for preparing food and they observe and discuss changes as they make jelly, sandwiches or milk shakes. Children are then taught to think about what they have done as they decide which is their favourite flavour. By the time that they leave the reception class children can use a computer mouse independently to solve simple mathematical problems and draw a picture on the screen.
76. Teachers introduce children to the idea of prayer well and children develop a good knowledge of their own religion, of special days and of past and future events in their lives. However, they are provided with very limited opportunities to learn about other cultures.

Physical Development

77. Throughout the Foundation Stage children are provided with many activities to develop their large and their finer physical control and their progress is satisfactory. They develop basic physical skills through physical education lessons and outdoor play. Children’s control of small tools such as scissors and construction toys is satisfactory. Young children in the nursery are taught the importance of keeping healthy and that running makes them hot and increases their heart rate.

Creative development

78. Teachers in the nursery and reception class recognise that creative development is an area in which many children lack experience when they enter the nursery. Consequently, they provide many opportunities in this area, particularly for experimenting with paint and learning rhymes and songs. Children progress satisfactorily and are constantly shown how to develop their skill and control. Children are encouraged to develop their imaginative play, through domestic role-play and the use of construction toys and trucks, and to investigate using their senses through a range of experiences, including exploring sounds and listening to music.

ENGLISH

79. Since the previous inspection the attainment of pupils at the age of 11 has improved. The school has successfully addressed the key issue “to continue to improve reading standards at Key Stage 1”. Attainment at the age of seven in reading has improved consistently since 1996. However, standards of presentation have declined throughout the school. Writing at Key Stage 1, which was average at the time of the previous inspection and well above average in 1999, has declined to below average in 2000. This variation is probably due to the particular group of pupils, which includes a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and some challenging behaviour. However, given their results in reading and mathematics, the school needs to carry out further analysis. Pupils’ positive attitudes have been maintained.

80. In the National Curriculum tests in 2000, 11-year-olds achieved above average results both in comparison with national figures and those of similar schools. In 1999 the percentage of pupils achieving the expected National Curriculum level was above the national average but the percentage achieving the higher level was below the national average. The school has successfully addressed the needs of the higher attaining pupils by the use of a booster class so that, in 2000, 41 per cent of pupils achieved the higher level. The pupils who left the school in July 2000 made very good progress in their four years in Key Stage 2.
81. The standards achieved by seven-year-olds were above the national average in reading and below the national average in writing in the 2000 tests. When compared with those of similar schools (based on the numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals) these results are close to average in reading and below average in writing.
82. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls at either age seven or 11.
83. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 well prepared for the National Curriculum and many have good skills in reading and writing. They have been stimulated by a rich range of experiences and spoken language and have become familiar with story structure and the conventions of reading. At this point in time most pupils have a sight vocabulary, know the alphabet and can recognise initial sounds in words. Many form letters correctly and copy writing, and the most able independently write simple sentences ending with a full stop.
84. These skills are built upon successfully in Year 1, but in Year 2 pupils make little progress, primarily due to the large proportion of pupils with special needs in this year group. Pupils make good progress in the upper classes of Key Stage 2 and some very high attainment was seen in Year 4 as a direct result of some very good teaching.
85. Speaking and listening skills were satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good by the end of Key Stage 2. These skills are developed throughout the school primarily through discussions. In Year 1 drama is also included. There is an element of dialogue and reflection in most lessons and consequently pupils' spoken language and learning is extended in most areas of the curriculum. This constant verbal stimulation and role modelling together with challenging questioning is a major strength within the school and a contributory factor towards the progress pupils make and the good standards of speaking and listening found in Year 6. Technical vocabulary is presented to pupils in most areas of the curriculum and pupils are expected to use these terms. By Year 6 pupils are discussing the derivations of words from their Greek roots in their mathematics and history lessons and the language used in the Witch's spell from Macbeth in their literacy lessons.
86. There is a structured approach to the teaching of reading and reading schemes are used until Year 4. This system has proven to be successful for all but the more able pupils in the school. The school has given parents good guidelines for supporting reading at home and parents play a valuable role in this aspect of their children's education, particularly for pupils in Key Stage 1. The Key Stage 1 library is well stocked for the less able readers but there are few books of a suitable level for the more able readers and this restricts their range of reading experiences. Pupils' attitudes to reading are good. Throughout the school pupils enjoy their shared reading times in the literacy lessons, but there is no time on the timetable devoted to individual reading sessions when pupils read to their class teacher. At Key Stage 1 this leads to inaccuracies in teachers' knowledge of pupils and the books they have read and at Key Stage 2 this denies pupils the opportunity for individual support and reflection on their reading habits. In Year 6 pupils are given guidance on their reading experiences when they are given homework to read from a broad range of genre.
87. Writing is taught well in the literacy lessons. In many of the good lessons seen, teachers sit with groups of pupils in shared writing experiences. During the inspection, pupils in Year 1 were successfully introduced to the conventions of writing lists. In Year 2, pupils are sufficiently

confident to write independently, as they did when writing a prayer. However, they are not making satisfactory progress with their knowledge of writing conventions and sentence constructions. The content of much of the written work in Year 3 is of an unsatisfactory standard. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards have risen due to the good teaching particularly in years 4 and 6 and pupils are writing poetry and short prose with some fluency. Throughout the key stage pupils are given limited opportunities to use the skills taught in the literacy lessons for extended writing in a range of genre and in other subjects, in order to practice and extend the craft of writing.

88. In Year 1, teaching builds upon the good start to handwriting and letter formation developed in the reception year. This progress is not sustained in Year 2. The school policy is for pupils to write using a cursive script by Year 3 but many pupils in Year 4 are still printing their work. By Year 6, pupils' handwriting is legible and uniformly formed, but the standard of presentation in this class and across the school is only just satisfactory.
89. The school teaches spelling rigorously and consistently. Each year group learns the vocabulary suggested in the National Literacy Strategy and additional relevant vocabulary in other subjects. Support staff are effectively utilised to teach the most frequently occurring words to the less able pupils and this assists them with their writing and their reading. Spelling standards are satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and through this good practice improve in Key Stage 2.
90. Literacy lessons are well planned with stimulating and clear introductions. Pupils are made aware of the learning objectives of the lesson and this increases their understanding. In some lessons the tasks are differentiated to match the abilities of the pupils. Individual targets are not set in order to further challenge and extend the more able pupils and support the less able learners. Pupils with English as an additional language are not given additional support to ensure they fully understand the learning. There are many assessments undertaken in the school but they are not yet sufficiently closely analysed and used to help each pupil progress. Teachers discuss pupils' work with them during the lesson, giving advice, but only in Year 6 are the written comments consistently giving pupils an understanding of their strengths and where they need to improve. Reading homework is given in Key Stage 1 and Year 6 pupils are given work which extends their learning in the class and their ability to research independently.
91. There are good support systems for less able pupils. Pupils in Year 1 who are not progressing well enough with their reading are given additional reading support in withdrawal classes. Classroom assistants generally support this work well. At times, however, particularly in Key Stage 1, this support is not sufficiently well matched to the needs of the lowest ability within the group. Additional literacy support is provided for those pupils in Years 3 and 4 identified as working below national expectations. The impact of this programme has not yet been evaluated.
92. The National Literacy Strategy has been fully implemented with a consistency of approach throughout the school. This is leading to improved standards in Key Stage 2 particularly in classes where the teaching is very good. The policy document for English has been up-dated but the inclusion of information technology is not as prominent as in the previous document. Monitoring of the planning and the taught curriculum is now established and is developing a consistency within the teaching.
93. Pupils' opportunities to use the library and to use computers have been severely restricted in the previous year due to fire damage. The Key Stage 2 library is now functioning and is fully stocked and although pupils are not completely familiar with the classification system they are rapidly becoming proficient at using CD-ROM and the Internet as research tools.

MATHEMATICS

94. Standards achieved by 11-year-olds in the National Curriculum tests this year are above average when compared both with national results and those of similar schools. Over the course of the

last four years standards have fluctuated, due to different groups of pupils, but remained above national standards. These high standards, which have been maintained since the last report, were also evident during the course of the inspection and are the result of the good teaching and learning, particularly at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 6 know the names of regular polygons and understand that 'regular' means that the sides and angles are the same. This knowledge aids them in their work on locating the lines of symmetry of two-dimensional shapes, reflecting irregular shapes along mirror lines and for higher attaining pupils, giving instructions to translate regular polygons.

95. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in the National Curriculum tests for 2000 were well above average when compared both with national standards and those of similar schools. Over the course of the last four years standards have improved in line with the national trend. The standards in Key Stage 1 have improved since the last inspection due to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. These high standards, however, are not reflected in the current Year 2 because of the existing staffing and behaviour difficulties in the current year group. The standards of work observed during the inspection were in line with national expectations. Pupils recognise odd and even numbers up to 100, but are unsure about how to explain the differences between these.
96. The National Numeracy Strategy has been adopted in the school and the introduction of the three-part mathematics lesson has contributed to the improving standards. However, the targets that the school has set are not particularly challenging. In 2000 they were exceeded by twelve per cent and inspection findings indicate that the targets for 2001 will also be exceeded.
97. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Several lessons were seen including all classes and all teachers most of these were satisfactory or good. One very good lesson and one poor lesson were seen. There is a difference between the two key stages with all the good and very good teaching being in Key Stage 2. The deterioration in the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 since the last inspection can be attributed to the repercussions of the school's recent fire and significant staff movement. In the good and very good teaching, teachers, in both their planning and in their introductions, carefully build upon pupils' previous learning, thus extending their knowledge and understanding. In Year 4, after highly focused and rapid oral work on different number patterns, pupils quickly identified patterns in number squares. This effective method was complimented by carefully targeted questions that matched the abilities of pupils of different prior attainment. Teachers choose activities that interest and challenge their pupils. In a Year 1 lesson on place value and two-digit numbers, the pupils' fascination with the teacher's demonstration with number cards amounted to 'magic'. All teachers have good subject knowledge and they use a variety of teaching strategies to provide meaningful learning experiences. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils accurately used their own knowledge of the three times table to calculate the costs and change required from an everyday shopping list. In all but one lesson, the quality of teaching and the very positive relationships ensured that pupils were enthusiastic mathematicians who were eager to complete their work. The quality of relationships and the nurturing ethos of the school encourages pupils to solve problems themselves whenever possible but to seek help if necessary. Year 5 pupils drew rectangles and discussed their properties with the teacher before investigating the relationship between the perimeter and the area of this shape. Resources, such as the Year 6 introductory video on shape, were well chosen and were effective at introducing and engaging pupils into a new and complex topic. The school policy of marking pupils work during lessons was adhered to in a minority of lessons. Homework was only set in Year 6 during the week of the inspection.
98. In the majority of lessons teachers' planning provided activities that broadly met the needs of pupils of different abilities. However, in some lessons the work for the higher attaining pupils did not offer them sufficient challenge. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because of the quality of teaching that the majority of them receive. There are, however, very few pupils on the register of special educational needs who have numeracy targets as part of their individual education plans. In a few lessons, insufficient time was

allowed for effective plenary sessions when pupils could reflect on their learning and teachers assess the knowledge and skills acquired. In the poor lesson the lack of effective class and school strategies to deal with a minority of pupils, who exhibited challenging behaviour, prevented the majority of pupils in that class from learning. Insufficient use is made of ICT to consolidate and develop the pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding of, for example, numbers and data analysis.

99. The subject co-ordinator is aware of the areas that need to be developed and has an action plan to address them. An improvement since the last inspection is the school's recent introduction of a system to monitor teaching. The school has also developed a sound set of procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment. However, a weakness remains in the analysis and use of this information to inform planning for both cohorts and individuals. The new mathematics policy is comprehensive and details a wide range of links with other subjects. There is, however, no advice on how these can be developed and there were only limited examples of the use of mathematics in other subjects.

SCIENCE

100. Judgements are based on six lesson observations, examination of pupils' work and school documentation and a discussion with the subject co-ordinator. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection at Key Stage 1 and results have improved at Key Stage 2 at a similar rate to that recorded nationally.
101. The standards achieved by 11-year-olds in 2000 were above average both in comparison with national results and those in similar schools. All pupils achieved the expected level and 38 per cent achieved the higher level. During the inspection pupils made a good start on new work involving investigations about decay and microbes in Year 6 and solids and liquids in Year 5. In both classes pupils expressed their opinions clearly and made some good insights. Year 6 pupils used a dictionary well to find the meaning of new scientific words and started their long-term experimental study well. Year 5 pupils quickly understood the lesson objectives and identified a range of liquids and solids and some substances that can be both in different circumstances, for example nail varnish. The teacher had planned discussion of this phenomenon for the next lesson and clearly expressed her pleasure at the pupils' insightful observations. Pupils currently in Year 6 are above average. Higher attaining pupils compare healthy and unhealthy plants and explain the reasons for the differences well and they understand the process of photosynthesis very well. All pupils sort living things into two main groups of plants and animals and then into various sub-groups. The different levels of ability can be seen clearly in this work by the number and accuracy of sub-groups identified. All pupils are on track to achieve the expected level by the end of the school year and a good number to achieve the higher level. Throughout the key stage there are good examples of investigative work. For example, pupils in Year 5 have completed an investigation into changing pulse rates well and pupils in Year 4 have carried out a good investigation into melting. However, the work completed in Year 3 this school term covers a theme about eating and one activity on forces and is overall insufficient.
102. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific facts, concepts and methods are broadly average. Pupils in Year 2 identify foods that are good or bad for healthy living. They complete a simple bar graph to record the findings of a survey of favourite foods in their class. All pupils identify living and non-living things and match adult and baby animals correctly. Individual pupils explain that 'a stone is not living because it doesn't move' and 'trees are living because they grow from small to big'. Higher attaining pupils compare changes in human babies as they get older well. Pupils in Year 1 have a reasonable understanding of light and dark for their age. They name several different sources of light and say that at night, 'the moon and bats come' and 'the sun goes to the bottom of the world'. They made good progress when learning about people and animals and, for example, can identify differences between a baby and a five-year-old child. They name and describe the basic function of the five senses.

103. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It was very good in one lesson, good in two and satisfactory in three. A strong feature of the teaching in Years 5 and 6 is that it successfully develops the pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific procedures and ideas such as how and why we record our findings in different ways. In most lessons the teacher successfully conveys the learning objectives to the pupils right at the start and in some this is reinforced by writing them on the board and referring to them in the middle and at the end of the lesson. Teaching and learning were satisfactory in the Year 2 lesson because the teacher successfully engaged all of the pupils in the activity. Despite several pupils calling out and talking inappropriately during the whole-class discussion, all pupils understood the individual task and completed a satisfactory amount of work in the time given. The task was effectively matched to the less able pupils by simplifying the worksheet.
104. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows considerable variation in coverage of different parts of the National Curriculum programmes of study, amount of completed work, and standards of marking ranging from very good to barely satisfactory. Sometimes work is not marked at all or there are no comments to praise success or help pupils understand what they need to do next. The best marking is seen in Y1, Y5 and Y6 but even here there is insufficient challenge to extend the thinking of above average pupils.
105. The headteacher is acting as subject co-ordinator for a period of time between the retirement of a long-serving teacher and the establishment of a new teacher to the school with this responsibility identified for a future date. There is a good subject action plan included in the school improvement plan. The headteacher observed two lessons at Key Stage 2 in the summer term 2000 as part of a new programme of monitoring teaching. The arrangements for assessing what pupils know, understand and can do and the use of this information to inform future planning is satisfactory. Teachers' half-termly assessments are now informed by the use of recently introduced commercially produced units of work and tests. The school's science scheme of work is based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's exemplar and supplemented by other commercially produced materials. The school is replacing resources lost as a result of the fire as quickly as possible and they are currently adequate.

ART and DESIGN

106. Since the previous inspection, attainment in art and design has declined in Key Stage 2. There is a new policy document, but this lacks sufficient detail to ensure that skills are taught progressively throughout the school. Learning from the work of famous artists is not given sufficient prominence. The broad range of activities identified in the previous inspection has been extended to include pottery and photography but the use of computers is not included within the planned provision. There is little planned inclusion of art from cultures around the world, as identified in the previous inspection.
107. In the previous school year the range of activities provided in art was reduced due the impact of a severe fire. The portfolio of previous work was destroyed. The planned development of this subject including assessment has been delayed due to the long-term illness of the co-ordinator.
108. It is not possible to make secure overall judgements about the standards in art. Attainment in the work seen at the end of the current unit of work was unsatisfactory in Year 6. Pupils in this year group produced portraits of the staff of the school and drawings of people in action. Although the portraits displayed had a lot of character, they almost all lacked the skilled application of line and tone expected from pupils of this age. In the sketchbooks for this year group there were no designs, plans or drafts of portraits to indicate how the required skills had been taught and the portraits developed. In Year 5 pupils have produced still life representations from observational drawings and in Year 4 their still life work was from a symmetrical perspective. Some of this work displayed was of a good standard. In the three oldest classes of the school the work of famous artists was not included within these teaching programmes. All pupils, including the

more talented, would have benefited from this additional stimulus. In Year 4, art and history is sometimes effectively combined.

109. Little art teaching has yet taken place in Year 2. In this year group pupils have drawn faces many of which are of an appropriate standard. In Year 1 pupils have painted portraits and these pupils have a good control of paint. The art portfolios of pupils in Year 1 contain work showing a good feel for pattern and design. In one of the sketchbooks presented from this year group, the work showed considerable talent.
110. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. Only one art lesson was seen during the inspection. In this lesson the teaching was unsatisfactory, primarily due to the teacher's lack of subject knowledge. Artists' work was presented to pupils but not discussed effectively in order to extend pupils' understanding. Foreground figures were placed on the teacher's model ignoring the rules of perspective. Consequently in this lesson pupils learned little about how to construct a pictorial scene and made little progress with the development of their skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111. Since the previous inspection, design and technology has been completely replanned and restructured to the requirements of the new National Curriculum. Local education authority planning documents have been adopted to provide support for teachers and promote appropriate standards of work. The new policy document is comprehensive. It provides good guidance for teachers particularly on aspects of safety. It does not include guidance on the use of computers or indicate to teachers the skills taught to pupils in previous years to assist them with their planning. The need for assessment systems, indicated in the previous report has not yet been addressed. Apart from a lack of construction kits there are adequate resources to meet the planned work in this subject.
112. Due to the severe fire there was no evidence of pupils' previous work. Almost all resources were lost and the implementation of design and technology was severely hampered throughout the previous school year.
113. It was not possible to see any lessons in Key Stage 2 during the inspection. There is insufficient evidence upon which to make a secure judgement in relation to attainment by the end of Key Stage 2.
114. Only in Year 2 has design and technology been taught this term. One lesson was seen being taught in this year group. Attainment of the pupils was not to a high enough standard because many of the planned skills for this lesson, and consequently for the unit of work, were not taught. Teaching in this lesson was well supported by a classroom assistant and a volunteer. The design element was restricted by the fact that a template was provided for the pupils. Skills of cutting and applying glue were practised. During the lesson pupils were not fully challenged and did not experience sewing or designing a face, two skills which were planned to be taught. At the end of the lesson pupils had an opportunity to evaluate their work and they did this sensibly as part of a class discussion.

GEOGRAPHY

115. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. No significant weaknesses were then identified and many of the strengths have been maintained. The good subject knowledge of teachers continues to support effective teaching and investigative learning in most lessons with high pupil interest in their work and good response to tasks still predominant. While improvement has not been strong, the new co-ordinator is aware of aspects that need development, so that the capacity for future improvement is good.

116. Pupils make good progress from age seven to 11 and standards are in line with expectations by the end of Year 6. Pupils know the major rivers of the world and most place them accurately in their continents. They explain the water cycle and identify consequences of high and low rainfall. Some pupils produce good written accounts of experiments conducted in the playground after rainfall, but many reports contain insufficient detail. The work of the highest attainers is characterised more by higher organisational and presentational skills than superior geographical understanding. This suggests that these pupils are not encountering a significant challenge in some of their work. Standards are below expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. This is because, while children make good progress in Year 1, this is unsatisfactory in Year 2. Although pupils in Year 2 have a developing awareness of places beyond their own locality and most can identify England on a map of the British Isles, they have a lower than expected knowledge of the places that they have learned about. They are too dependent on the ideas of the teacher when listing examples of types of transport and few are able to compare their characteristics. Many have limited listening and speaking skills, so that discussions are less productive than they should be.
117. It was only possible to judge the quality of teaching on one lesson in each key stage. It was good in a Year 1 lesson and very good in a Year 4 lesson. In these lessons, good questioning, including a variety of styles of questions, was effective in enabling pupils to recall their knowledge from earlier lessons and in promoting good levels of participation. The teachers effectively developed the pupils' understanding based on their previous knowledge. In the Year 4 lesson, the work on rivers was especially effective in encouraging pupils to link the content of this lesson to earlier work in geography, religious education and history. In Year 1, the pupils were encouraged to express opinions about places in their home area and to spot patterns in geographical themes. There was also a good focus on developing observational skills. In both lessons, good management of movement around the classroom for new activities by the teachers, and a learning support assistant who was present in Year 1, and the positive response of pupils to this, ensured that time was used well. In these lessons, the quality of teaching and the good attitudes and behaviour of the children promoted good learning. A Year 2 lesson was also seen. While learning and progress were unsatisfactory due to the inability of teaching to overcome the effects of the poor behaviour of some pupils, there was insufficient evidence to come to a firm conclusion about the overall quality of teaching in this lesson. Marking throughout the school is generally up to date, although often rather cursory, with mistakes and uncompleted work sometimes being ticked.

HISTORY

118. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory, as the only weakness identified then has not been addressed. Much of the teaching continues to be to the whole class with very little evidence of tasks being matched to prior attainment and, in particular, of extra challenges being provided for higher attaining pupils. However, many of the strengths that were identified have been maintained well. Teachers continue to use a variety of resources well, including library books, reproductions of old newspaper articles and dictionaries. The focus on the use of evidence and investigative work remain strengths. Pupils continue to have high levels of interest and enthusiasm for their work. A recently appointed co-ordinator is well aware of those aspects that need development, so that the capacity for future improvement is good.
119. Progress is good throughout Key Stage 2 and standards are in line with expectations by the end of Year 6. All pupils research and present findings about the Acropolis and Greek gods in written accounts and tables, with the written and drawn work of some being of a particularly high quality. They understand different ways in which the past is represented, having a good awareness of the role that myths and legends play in telling us about classical Greek culture. Standards of attainment are below expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, because of unsatisfactory progress in Year 2. Although pupils have some knowledge of the events of the Great Fire of London, the ability of pupils in Year 2 to sequence these in a timeline is inferior to that of Year 1 pupils, who create good timelines of events in their lives. Some Year 2 pupils are

able to understand the value of eye-witness evidence, can talk about this and write short written accounts. Other pupils have very limited listening skills, however, so that their own learning and that of those children who are interested in the topics they are studying is impaired when they are unable to talk about, or present, their work.

120. The quality of teaching is good overall. In Key Stage 2, teaching is generally good and is often very good. Teachers' expectations are high and effort and achievement are encouraged by praise. Good links with previous work support the continuity of pupils' learning and focus on investigation and open-ended questioning promotes the development of historical understanding. Teachers ensure that all pupils are included in whole-class activities and provide a good range of stimulating sources. Pupil responses are sometimes not fully utilised; for example when they talk about relevant programmes seen on television. Teachers occasionally provide answers, rather than letting pupils volunteer their own. Links between different periods studied are occasionally under-emphasised. Marking is generally up to date and encouraging but where improvements are suggested these are not always followed up. In a Year 6 lesson there was a particularly good opportunity to develop literacy skills when pupils researched the Greek origins of English words, including the names of many of the subjects that they learn. Pupils in Year 5 have regular opportunities to work on the class computers. However, in the one lesson seen in Key Stage 1, which was in Year 2, teaching and learning were unsatisfactory. This was because the poor behaviour of some pupils was not successfully dealt with and this led to a curtailment of activities and consequent failure to achieve the planned learning outcomes. Although the behaviour of some pupils frustrates learning outcomes in Year 2, their good response in other years makes a strong contribution to their learning.

INFORMATION and COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

121. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory because the school currently fails to meet the statutory requirements for ICT in the National Curriculum. Use of ICT to support work in other subjects is very limited and most subjects do not include detailed plans for ICT activities in their schemes of work. Most computer activities continue to involve word processing. There is a little use of CD-ROM and of the Internet for research and e-mail for communication. Learning opportunities in using modern technology to monitor or control events are virtually non-existent. The need to provide teachers with high quality ICT training continues to be urgent. However, major factors in the school's current weaknesses are the exceptional circumstances and extreme difficulties that it has faced due to the fire that had such a devastating effect on its development and plans in this subject. The school has worked hard to restore the very good level of computer provision that it had achieved shortly before the fire and its new computer room will very soon be available to complement the computers already available in classrooms. There are good plans to provide local authority and New Opportunities Funded training for teachers. Although there is an urgent need to translate general intentions into detailed plans for developing the school's ICT curriculum and assessment procedures, membership of the Dudley Grid for Learning provides a strong basis from which to move forward. The capacity for future improvement is, therefore, very good.
122. Because the new ICT room is not yet available for teaching, no lessons were seen in which whole classes used computers and little work was available during the inspection on which to base a judgement of standards. Evidence from conversations with pupils and the very limited number of lessons in which small groups used computers, shows that standards are in line with expectations in the areas in which work takes place. This is using computers to present and find information. However, opportunities to work in any of the other aspects are too few for satisfactory progress to take place or expected standards to be achieved. In Key Stage 2, pupils are able to present work on a word processor, such as book reviews for English, or descriptions of friends to be used in an art project. Some pupils use tables to present work on ancient Greek gods in history. In geography, information obtained from measurements of rainfall and puddles taken in the playground is entered into a spreadsheet and graphs produced from this. Pupils have used the Internet to support their research, including work where some pupils enhanced

work on foods by finding information about hazards from decay and germs and presented this in a display. No evidence was available for Key Stage 1.

123. Because no substantial teaching or learning took place during the inspection, it is not possible to judge these.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

124. All of the pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught Italian for half an hour each week. It was not possible to see any of these lessons during the inspection and make judgements on the standards pupils' achieve or the quality of teaching. However, it is unusual for primary schools in this country to give this amount of time to teaching a modern foreign language and it is clearly a significant additional learning opportunity beyond legal requirements. When the registered inspector greeted pupils in Italian they responded with familiarity and understanding. Some pupils asked questions beyond his very limited experience of the language.

MUSIC

125. Judgements are based on four lesson observations, examination of documents and resources and a discussion with the headteacher. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
126. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly in line with national expectations. There is insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement at the end of Key Stage 1. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching was good in the one lesson seen at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, one lesson was satisfactory and two were very good. A very good lesson in Year 6 was particularly effective in getting pupils to express interesting and often very perceptive views about pieces of classical music (composed by Bach), African rhythm music, heavy rock music and Indian music. The teacher managed to maintain very high standards and a good focus to the lesson even though the timetable meant that it took place in three parts at different times of the day. Pupils in Year 5 made very good gains in their knowledge and understanding of octaves and harmony. This was because the teaching was planned and delivered very well with good opportunities for pupils to participate in listening to recorded music, simple performance and discussion. In a short Year 3 lesson at the end of the school day, the teacher effectively developed the pupils' sense of rhythm and tempo by getting the pupils to repeat a simple song several times and each time leaving more and more spaces where words should be. Pupils throughout the school clearly enjoy listening to music and expressing opinions about it, singing and performing. Younger pupils perform actions at the same time as singing familiar songs such as 'If you're happy and you know it' and use words such as loud and soft to describe music. There were no examples of pupils having opportunities to compose their own music.
127. The co-ordinator leads whole-school activities, the school choir and lunch-time recorder groups. In the past year or so, the choir and other school groups have performed in the Dudley Music Festival, a Catholic celebration of Year 2000, at a local secondary school, at a home for the elderly and at the school summer fair. The school is awaiting a new local authority scheme of work based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's materials which it is currently using. Instrumental tuition, provided by the local authority's music service and paid for by parents, contributes well to the learning of those pupils involved. There are weekly sessions for several pupils in playing the violin and cello and two in guitar. The school does not have a sufficient quantity or variety of recorded music to contribute to the pupils' cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. As only two lessons were timetabled during the days of the inspection, no overall judgements can be made about the standards pupils achieve or the quality of teaching. Photographs were provided of some physical activities but these were not very informative about teaching and learning. However, in the two dance lessons observed pupils were demonstrating skills and

aptitudes in line with expectations for their age. School records show that the majority of pupils learn to swim 25 metres by the end of Key Stage 2.

129. In the two lessons observed, the teaching was satisfactory. In both lessons due regard was placed on the pupils' health and safety which reflects the schools caring ethos. The lessons were carefully planned so they built upon pupils' previous experiences to successfully develop their skills further. Lessons began with lively warm-up sessions that captured the pupils' attention and enthusiasm. Then, under careful teacher supervision, pupils stretched their limbs in readiness for the main part of the lesson. Pupils in Key Stage 2 were able to identify and demonstrate stretches for different parts of the body such as the thigh. There was, however, insufficient emphasis by teachers on the importance of this aspect of healthy living. Teachers' instructions were clear and precise and pupils knew exactly what was required. In both lessons, good choices of music, such as a piece with a strong rhythm, inspired pupils to be inventive in their movements and all pupils developed well. The prolonged playing of the chosen music, however, was laborious and lessened the pace of the lesson and the enthusiasm of the pupils. Pupils used the rhythm and the mood of the music to sequence a variety of movements that incorporated changes in height, direction and speed. Pupils' evaluation of their own work and that of others was effectively incorporated into both lessons, although there were few opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their own dance sequences.
130. There are no class records detailing pupil attainment that would help inform future planning and provide both support and challenge for all pupils, irrespective of their prior attainment.
131. The school currently uses local guidance on the teaching of physical education. There is, however, no monitoring of the quality of teaching to ensure that this is being adhered to and that the standards in all parts of this subject are in line with national expectations.