

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **St Andrews First School**

Hewell Road  
Barnt Green  
Birmingham  
B45 8NG

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 116865

Headteacher: Miss Kay Cholmondeley

Reporting inspector: Mrs Janet Sinclair  
19824

Dates of inspection: 4 – 7 December, 2000

Inspection number: 225004  
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: First  
School category: Voluntary aided  
Age range of pupils: 4 - 9

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Hewell Road  
Barnt Green  
Birmingham

Postcode: B45 8NG

Telephone number: 0121 445 1410

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Rev. Rob Fieldson

Date of previous inspection: 18 March, 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs Janet Sinclair 19824	Registered inspector	English, history, physical education, provision for English as an additional language, special educational needs	Leadership and management, teaching and learning, and standards.
Mrs Rosalie Watkins 9086	Lay inspector		Attitudes value and personal development, attendance, care of pupils and partnership with parents.
Mrs Ann McPhee 20376	Team inspector	Provision for the under fives, mathematics, geography, music and equal opportunities	Curricular opportunities provision for personal development.
Mr Christopher Shaw 18638	Team inspector	Science, design technology, information technology and art.	Efficiency and staffing accommodation and learning resources

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is a Church of England Voluntary Aided First School for boys and girls of four to nine years of age. There are one hundred and sixty six pupils on roll. The school draws most of its pupils from the village of Barnt Green and many of the pupils come from privileged backgrounds. Levels of attainment on entry to the school are generally above what is expected with many children having had pre-school experience. Pupil mobility is low and few pupils join the school at other than the usual time for first admission. Fifteen per cent of the pupils have special educational needs, which is below the national average and two per cent have a statement of special educational need, which is above the national average. Currently none of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is well below the national average of nineteen point one per cent. The school has two per cent of its pupils with English as an additional language, which is higher than average.

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

This is a good school that is doing most things really well and is making outstanding provision for music. Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very good. Standards are well above expectations in English and mathematics and high in science. Pupils make good progress both in these subjects and across the curriculum. The head teacher has a clear vision for the school's direction and has already made significant improvements across the school in the two years she has been in post. Teaching is good overall. However, teaching is unsatisfactory in the foundation stage, and particularly in one class, due to a lack of knowledge of how young children learn and unsatisfactory provision for their needs. This is the main weakness in the school's provision. Pupils enter the school with above average levels of attainment, they are taught well in Key Stage 1 and 2 and make good progress, expenditure per pupil is average and therefore the school provides good value for money.

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

- The specialist music teaching is inspirational and a strength of the school.
- The good and sometimes very good teaching in Years 2,3 and 4 is having a positive effect on standards and the rate of pupils' progress.
- The curricular opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 are very good.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very good; she provides clear and focused educational direction.
- The very good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development helps them to behave in a mature and responsible manner.
- The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good
- There are very good links with parents and reciprocally parents contribute very well to their children's learning.

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

- The provision for the foundation stage; by providing a more appropriate curriculum and ensuring that the unsatisfactory teaching in one class is eliminated.
- Marking of pupils' work so that it indicates clearly what pupils do well and where they need to improve and sharing this information with pupils.
- Assessment procedures so that they more clearly identify what stage pupils are at in their learning and what they need to learn next.

*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 1996. Since then the school has appointed a new head teacher and deputy headteacher who have been in post two years and one year respectively. They have worked hard on all of the key issues raised in the last report and have made good and sometimes very good progress in addressing them. There has been a significant improvement in standards in almost all areas of the curriculum, but particularly in history, geography and mathematics at Key Stage 2, which were raised as a key issue. Policies and schemes of work are now in place for all subjects and the school provides very good curricular opportunities for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. Teaching has improved significantly and classroom management is now good and often very good. The school takes satisfactory steps to ensure it is cost effective and has a secure monitoring system in place. The head teacher, senior management team, most staff and governors are committed to continued improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	A*	A*	A	A
Writing	A	B	A	A
Mathematics	A	A*	A	A

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

This table shows that the school's results are consistently well above average with only minor variations in the results year on year. The only relative weakness has been the number of pupils achieving at the higher Level 3 in writing. The school has worked hard to improve standards in this area and has been successful as twenty per cent of its pupils achieved Level 3 in writing this year, which was well above the national average and that of similar schools. Overall pupils achieve well and sometimes very well during their time in school.

Children enter the school with above average levels of attainment; they make unsatisfactory progress in aspects of the areas of learning in their reception year, satisfactory progress in Year 1 and good and sometimes very good progress in Years 2, 3 and 4. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress due to the well-planned support they receive. During the inspection pupils age seven were found to be attaining well above expectations in English and mathematics and attaining high standards in science and music. In all other subjects pupils are attaining above the expected level for their age.

By Year 4 pupils attain well above expectations in English, mathematics, science and music and above expectations in all other subjects except information and design technology where standards are in line with expectation.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to work and this has a positive impact on their learning. They demonstrate high levels of interest and concentration.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils respond very well to teachers' expectations, so that the school is an orderly and hard working community.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is very good. Pupils understand well how their actions affect others around them. The oldest pupils show considerable maturity in their responsible attitudes and care for others.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils come to school happily and very seldom stay away without good reason.

Behaviour at lunchtime is not as effectively managed as at all other times of the day

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. Five per cent of the teaching seen was excellent, twenty per cent very good, forty three per cent good, twenty-six per cent satisfactory and seven per cent unsatisfactory. All of the unsatisfactory teaching observed was in one YR/1 class.

The quality of teaching of English and mathematics is good. It is generally good in all other subjects. Teaching is unsatisfactory in the foundation stage, satisfactory in Year 1 and good in Years 2, 3 and 4. The specialist music teaching is excellent. The basic skills of numeracy and literacy are taught well in all classrooms and there is good detailed planning in place. The management of pupils is strong and questioning is used effectively to check pupils' knowledge and extend their thinking. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are supported well through the good efforts of teaching and support staff. The unsatisfactory teaching occurs in one class in R/1, and is linked to a lack of knowledge of how young children learn, unsatisfactory curricular planning for this age group and an over reliance on cutting and sticking activities to occupy children. Whilst teaching in the two other reception classes is satisfactory, developments are needed in the teachers' understanding of appropriate curricular provision for these children through purposeful play.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	In Key Stage 1 and 2, the school provides a very good curriculum. It is very effectively enhanced by the specialist support for music, the wide variety of extra curricular activities and links with the local community. The quality and range of the curriculum for the under fives is unsatisfactory.



Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Provision is well managed and additional support effectively supports pupils' learning. Parents are very effectively informed and included in this support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. They are well supported by their classroom teacher.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for personal, moral social and cultural development is very good and permeates the age ranges and curriculum. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is good provision for pupils' welfare, within a happy community. Records of what they know and can do are satisfactorily used in planning further stages in learning. Further improvements in this area are planned.

The curricular provision for the under-fives is unsatisfactory. These children are in YR/1 classes and mainly receive a Year 1 curriculum, which provides too few opportunities for purposeful play.

Partnership with parents is strongly developed. Parents are very keen to support their children and teachers build effectively on this enthusiasm, so that pupils' learning benefits significantly.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management by the head teacher is very good. She is well supported by her deputy, senior management team and staff with curricular responsibilities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. They fulfil their responsibilities well, are committed to developing their role and increasing their knowledge of the work of the school. Their role as critical friend is insufficiently developed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The head teacher and governors have a clear and accurate view of the school's strength and weaknesses and monitor progress against the priorities in the school development plan. The success criteria however within the plan are insufficiently specific to permit rigorous monitoring.
The strategic use of resources	The school has adequate resources, which it uses effectively to promote learning. Financial decisions are based on a sound planning and development process. Financial control is satisfactory overall.

Overall there is a good match of staff to the demands of the curriculum. Learning resources and accommodation are satisfactory apart from the information centre, which is very good and the outdoor provision for the under-fives, which is unsatisfactory. The school applies the principles of best value effectively when purchasing goods.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children like school and behave well.</li><li>• The school helps the children become mature and responsible</li><li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• Children respect each other and like their teachers.</li><li>• There have been good improvements since the last inspection.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li><li>• The rigidity of the reading scheme structure.</li><li>• The amount of time young children spend on cutting, gluing and sticking activities.</li></ul>

The inspection team agrees with most of the positive views expressed by parents but found that children's behaviour was very good rather than good and that the school is very well led and managed rather than well led and managed. With regard to what parents would like to see improved, the team found that the range of activities outside lessons was in fact very good, the reading scheme structure needs to provide a much wider variety of books and that young children spend too much time cutting, gluing and sticking.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

1. The school has made good and sometimes very good improvements in the standards in all subjects except design technology and information technology at Key Stage 2, which have remained the same, since the last inspection.
2. The results of assessments undertaken when children start school show that attainment on entry is above average. Progress throughout the reception year is hampered by teachers' lack of in-depth knowledge of this age group, inappropriate curricular provision and unsatisfactory classroom organisation. The children are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals in their mathematical, creative and physical development and in aspects of their knowledge and understanding of the world and their personal, social and emotional development. They are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy. Progress varies between satisfactory and unsatisfactory across many of the areas of learning due to unsatisfactory teaching in one class and inappropriate curricular provision overall. The whole school environment contributes well to the children's personal, social and emotional development. Children are confident and well behaved and concentrate well. However, within the classrooms they are given limited opportunities to take part in independent activities through which they can develop their own initiative, make imaginative use of resources or sustain and develop their ideas for play. Most children know their phonic sounds and letter names well. However, there are too few opportunities for them to use their knowledge of sounds to develop a confident approach to their writing. Children enjoy reading and do so with teachers and other adult helpers. Many form letters correctly and produce writing that is consistent in size. Most count to twenty and beyond. They carry out simple addition and understand the concept of more and less. They measure using non-standard units.
3. The Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests results for 2000, in terms of average points, are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics, both in comparison with the national average and similar schools (based on the number of pupils having free school meals).
4. The school's results have remained well above average over a three-year period but the number of pupils achieving at the higher Level 3 in writing has shown a gradual improvement. This is due to the increased profile given to writing across the school and the use of the "Language Alive" drama group to stimulate imaginative writing. Over time, there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls or different ethnic minorities. However, this year boys' performance overall was lower than girls but this was due to the higher than average number of boys with special educational needs in this cohort. The results of optional tests taken in Years 3 and 4 show that the school maintains and gradually improves on standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 1.
5. Current standards, based on lessons seen, pupils work and displays indicate that standards are being maintained in English and mathematics in both key stages whilst science deteriorates slightly at Key Stage 2 due to an insufficiently clear match of work to pupils of differing prior attainment.
6. Standards in speaking and listening are well above expectations. Pupils are articulate and have suitable opportunities to develop their speaking skills through a variety of discussions that take place across the curriculum. They speak confidently and accurately and quickly take on board the technical vocabulary involved in different subjects. Pupils listen very well in their lessons and this contributes very effectively to their learning. Reading is well above expectations; pupils are competent readers who demonstrate good levels of understanding but it is only in Year 4 that they read with real confidence and expression. Standards are well above expectations in writing. Pupils very quickly learn to write and spell correctly and understand the mechanics of writing. They write well in a variety of contexts and by Year 4 write appropriately for a variety of different audiences.
7. In mathematics pupils achieve well above expectations both by the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4. By the end of Key Stage 1 they count using hundreds tens and units. They multiply numbers

and are beginning to work with simple fractions. In Year 4 they are able to recognise and name number up to 10,000, recognise doubles and explain rotational symmetry and simple angles.

8. Standards in science are very high at Key Stage 1 and well above expectations in Year 4. By the end of Year 2 pupils can make good observations, record these and label the accompanying pictures accurately. Higher attaining pupils recognise the composition and function of soil in supporting plant life. Higher and average attaining pupils in Year 4 understand the balance of forces whilst below average pupils have some difficulty with this concept.
9. Standards in information technology are above expectations in Key Stage 1 but in line with expectations by the end of Year 4. The school has worked very hard, over a short period of time, to improve pupils' competence but this work is too recent to show an improvement in standards for pupils in Year 4. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils import text into a word processor. They organise instructions to make simple shapes to follow a course with a screen or floor robot. By Year 4 pupils use a word processor to produce a list of instructions for making a picture and use information technology for research purposes.
10. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are developed well across the curriculum. For example, pupils write on the role of the archaeologist in history and measure distances between places in geography.
11. Standards in all other subjects of the curriculum are either above or well above expectations except design and technology at Key Stage 2, which is in line with expectations. Standards in music are high and provision is outstanding.
12. Pupils with special educational needs receive good quality support from the learning support assistants which enables them to make good gains in their learning. The classroom teacher supports pupils with English as an additional language very well.
13. In both key stages pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment in all subjects of the curriculum and very well in music. This is due to the consistently good and sometimes very good teaching they receive in almost all subjects of the curriculum, especially in years 2, 3 and 4 and the excellent specialist music teaching.

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

14. Pupils' attitudes to learning, together with their behaviour and personal development, are very good as at the previous inspection.
15. Pupils of all ages come happily to school and settle down readily to work at the start of the day. They often show really good levels of effort, perseverance and enjoyment, and this contributes to the progress they make with learning. In geography for instance pupils were very interested and involved as they investigated data they had collected about local work and travel. Progress is also helped by the way they help each other when this is part of the lesson. A typical example was in a literacy session centred on a recipe, when Year 2 pupils tackled their tasks with determination, co-operating together to build their understanding of the text and to complete challenging work on it. These good relationships also extend between pupils and teachers, enabling pupils to confidently ask questions about points they do not understand.
16. Behaviour is very good in lessons, because pupils of all abilities are as a rule very interested in listening, in answering the teacher's questions, in completing their tasks, so that their attention seldom strays. The youngest ones show a similar capacity for good involvement to older ones, as when they enjoyed using percussion instruments to create the right sound effects for a story. Occasionally though, if the activity is not matched successfully to their learning needs, their interest falters and restlessness creeps in.
17. A real sense of responsibility is evident in pupils' attitudes to their classroom rules. They have a very well developed grasp of how important it is to behave well, so as to bring about a pleasant and

safe environment for others. They understand how to behave as good friends to one another. This understanding is reflected in the good behaviour around the building and in the playground. A small minority of pupils do find it hard to behave properly but usually manage this because of good guidance from staff. Any disagreements that arise are usually short-lived. They cheerfully undertake small tasks and duties as monitors, to help with the smooth functioning of the school. The oldest ones develop considerable confidence and independence, evident for instance when they explained the 'story sacks' they had made to parents of new children joining the school. The thoughtful care and consideration shown by pupils, as they help the elderly pianist who comes to play for assembly, is particularly notable.

18. Other aspects of personal development are also very good. When given opportunities, pupils explore feelings and ideas with considerable perception, for instance when they write poems about the feelings they associate with particular colours. The oldest pupils especially show a mature approach, for instance in voicing appreciation of their teachers' efforts and attitudes, and in their ability to recognise and discuss the unfairness of cheating.
19. Attendance is very good, as at the previous inspection. Pupils seldom miss school without good reason and this aids continuity in their learning and contributes to the good progress they make. There has been one fixed term exclusion in the last year.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

20. The quality of teaching is good and this is a good improvement since the last inspection when it was found to be satisfactory overall. Of the teaching seen five per cent was excellent, twenty per cent very good, forty three per cent good, twenty- five per cent satisfactory and seven per cent unsatisfactory. Teaching is unsatisfactory for children in the foundation stage due mainly to the high level of unsatisfactory teaching in one YR/1 class. In all subjects of the National Curriculum teaching is good or better in Years 2, 3 and 4 and mainly satisfactory in Year 1. Teaching is excellent in music.
21. The teachers for the under fives lack a clear understanding of how young children learn. They do not have the necessary classroom organisation to ensure the children have appropriate access to learning opportunities where they can investigate, create and initiate their own activities as well as engage in adult directed ones. Planning for these children lacks sufficient detail for their specific needs and at present they mainly follow the curriculum for Year 1 pupils. Many of the follow-up activities in which they engage involve cutting, sticking and colouring and they soon become bored with the lack of stimulation involved in this.
22. The teaching of basic numeracy and literacy skills is good across the school, planning for these is detailed and clearly identifies activities for pupils of differing prior attainment. The work is firmly based on guidance from the national strategies and ensures that pupil's skills are developed sequentially. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 are grouped according to ability for English and mathematics and this helps teachers focus their teaching specifically to meet their needs. In all of the English and mathematics lessons in years 2, 3 and 4 there is a good level of challenge for pupils and teachers use questioning effectively to develop knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson the teacher used effective questioning about tallying to encourage pupils to explain what it meant and how to do it. Good questioning by teachers generally encourages an enthusiastic response from pupils who are keen to demonstrate their skills and explain their thinking. Teachers make good use of technical vocabulary and pupils quickly internalise, use and understand the terms. For example, in a handwriting lesson in the Year 2/3 class the pupils clearly understood the terms "ascenders and descenders" and incorporated them conscientiously into their handwriting practice. The teachers manage their lessons very well and this leads to a very good work ethic, sustained concentration and a quiet atmosphere. The teaching of English and mathematics in Year1 is satisfactory overall. The whole class introductory sessions are well organised and provide work that is generally challenging and relevant. The main weaknesses in provision are the follow-up activities which rely too heavily on worksheets, involve a high level of cutting and sticking activities and insufficient focus on challenging pupils to develop their literacy or numeracy skills.

23. Teachers across the school make good use of opportunities to develop numeracy and literacy through other subjects, particularly in history, geography and design technology. Marking is generally not well used to set clear and specific targets for improvement that are shared with pupils and this is linked to weaknesses in assessment. The school is aware of the weaknesses in marking and plan to tackle them as part of their overall development plans for assessment. There are few samples of pupils' work linked to the National Curriculum to help teachers in identifying levels or what pupils need to learn to move on to the next level and without this clear knowledge it is difficult to mark work evaluatively.
24. Pupils with special educational needs are given good quality support and work well matched to their needs through the targets identified in their individual education plans and through class work that is generally well matched to their needs. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported by their class teacher to enable them to fully access the curriculum.
25. There are good and sometimes very good features in many lessons which contribute effectively to pupils' learning. Most teachers expect good behaviour and a responsible attitude to work and they create a purposeful working atmosphere that helps pupils to learn. This is clearly reflected in the many lessons where pupils concentrate, listen carefully to the teacher, settle to work quickly and have a good motivation to complete tasks and learn from them. This was not only seen in lessons but was evident from the scrutiny of work where all work was finished. All teachers have good relationships with their pupils and this creates good learning opportunities. In most classes pupils know that their ideas will be valued and this allows them to explain their thinking, for example, in mathematics, when explaining a shortcut for counting on or to volunteer ideas, as in geography when they comment 'Does a bigger scale help us to see houses?' In the good lessons teachers are well prepared and have good subject knowledge, lessons have brisk pace and are challenging. As a result pupils make significant gains in their learning, for example, in music where pupils are challenged to listen for accuracy "Can you hear the instrument we heard last week in this piece of music?" "Is this in 2.3 or 4 beat?" Planning is generally good with learning objectives clearly defined and good use is made of the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) documents to help with planning the foundation subjects. Teachers are beginning to make good use of the assessments within the units of work in the QCA schemes to identify what pupils have learned.
26. Where lessons are unsatisfactory the pace of the lessons is often slow, the content of the activities does not engage the pupils and the teacher has weak knowledge and understanding of the teaching skills required for the subject or area of learning. In these lessons the pupils lose interest or engage in chatting with each other and learning is limited as a result.
27. Good use is made of homework such as spellings, reading and tables on a regular basis. As pupils move through the school they are encouraged to carry out projects at home, for example, Year 4's work on their homes. Parents generally support their children's homework activities very well

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

28. The school provides a very good range of worthwhile opportunities for learning that reflects its aims and the interests of the pupils. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements, reflecting the school's Christian foundation. The literacy and numeracy strategies are in place and effectively enhance pupils' learning. In the Foundation Stage, however, the curriculum is insufficiently developed to provide the appropriate learning opportunities, both indoor and outdoor, that challenge pupils as well as develop their independent learning skills.
29. The needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well considered; the requirements of the Code of Practice for these pupils, including those with statements, are well met, ensuring good quality access to the curriculum. Good provision is made for pupils with English as an additional language. The school actively promotes its Equal Opportunities Policy with, for example, all pupils being given the opportunity to play a musical instrument should they wish.

30. Since the last inspection curricular provision has improved significantly. Provision for information technology has improved greatly. Key Stage 2 pupils have many more opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills in mathematics, history and geography and are attaining standards above those expected for their age. The Key Stage 2 curriculum now meets the recommended teaching time requirements. The school has made good progress, overall, since the last inspection although progress in developing curricular opportunities for the younger pupils has made very little progress.
31. The school enriches the curriculum through a very good range of extra-curricular activities such as short tennis, football and choir. Music is a strength of the school and plays a significant part in its day to day work, for example, collective worship, as well as developing pupils' performance skills by their participation in the local First Schools' Music Festival. The school has responded to parental concerns about the range of extra curricular activities and ensures that the interests of both boys and girls are catered for. The school also has a private arrangement with a French teacher who offers lunchtime classes for interested pupils. This is open to pupils in Key Stage 1. Field trips and the very effective links with the local community, including the Church, enrich pupils' experiences significantly. There are good links with partner institutions and this ensures a smooth transition across the phases.
32. The curriculum is also enriched by the participation of parents, both at home, through support with homework topics, and in school, through work in the classrooms. The work of classroom assistants, particularly in working with pupils with special educational needs, also impacts on pupils' progress and confidence. This is particularly noticeable when pupils are learning a new skill or working to understand a new concept.
33. Personal, social, moral, and cultural education has a very high priority within the school. The school's provision for moral development is very good and links well with the school's policy on sex, health and drugs' education. Even the very youngest pupils are able to explain, articulately, why smoking, drug taking, and drinking are bad for you. For example, one pupil explained, 'smoking is really bad for you, you know, the smoke goes down your throat and can become cancer and cancer kills you. I don't know how but I know it does. There are lots of different cancers'.
34. Pupils are clear about school rules and understand the importance of following them. They are given opportunities to reflect on issues such as 'what makes a good friend?' and are encouraged to personally check and see, against the classes agreed criteria, whether or not they are one. Year 4 pupils decided, independently, to support this year's Blue Peter Appeal, aware of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves and a belief that they should help. The school has given them a tremendous amount of support.
35. The development of pupils' social skills is very good. Pupils are given responsibilities, such as those of Year 4 pupils who act as 'ambassadors' for the school, by showing parents round. The number of visitors in school, including grandparents, provides pupils, of all ages, with the opportunity to talk to adults of various ages. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. School trips, and after school activities, also play a part in helping develop pupils' social skills by giving them opportunities to discover what makes a good team member, a considerate pupil and a good citizen. The special act of worship on Friday is highly valued by pupils and looked forward to with anticipation. This is when the headteacher rewards pupils for good behaviour as well as academic achievement. Pupils know that social skills, such as courtesy and consideration, are as important, as academic achievement. Pupils know this is important in St Andrew's First School and strive hard to achieve the schools aims and follow the rules.
36. Provision for cultural development is very good. Music is highly successful in broadening pupils' knowledge of music, instruments and composers from different countries and centuries. Art also extends pupils' knowledge of different styles and artists and in history lessons pupils are able to examine artefacts from the past, such as dolls, and compare them with those of today. Geography lessons promote pupils' understanding of different cultures, and the challenges faced in different parts of the world, for example, the work undertaken recently on Africa. Teachers' personal knowledge and experiences, as well as those of pupils in the school from different cultures,

enhance pupils' understanding of cultural differences and the reasons for them. The school is actively considering ways in which it can further develop pupils' awareness of the multicultural nature of modern British society. At present, the collective worship times, led by the Vicar, every Tuesday, have successfully engaged pupils in looking at the cultural diversity of countries such as Oman and the Gambia. Promoting multi-cultural awareness is a priority in this year's school development plan.

37. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory and has not made the same progress, as the other areas of development, since the last inspection. There are insufficient opportunities, during lessons, for pupils to reflect on what they are learning or experiencing. However, when instances do occur, such as the amazement expressed by Reception and Year 1 pupils at seeing a doll 130 years old, teachers do take the time to acknowledge how special and wonderful this is.

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

38. Very good procedures are in place for child protection and ensuring pupil welfare. The school offers a happy learning environment and care for pupils is effective, as at the previous inspection. Satisfactory routines are in place to assess pupils' academic attainment and progress and to use this information in planning future steps in teaching and learning. Staff draw on their understanding of each pupil's individual nature and needs, so as to give good support and guidance. Good procedures are in place for the management of behaviour. High expectations are generally upheld effectively, though at lunchtime they are less clear. Very good steps are taken to support any pupil with particular behavioural difficulties, by developing partnership with relevant support agencies. Very good systems are in place to respond to bullying or other harassment if this should arise.
39. Educational guidance is good. Teachers help pupils to become enthusiastic learners. Pupils appreciate the awards they gain for good work and good efforts. The system recently introduced for recording targets in homework diaries encourages them to take responsibility for working towards individual improvement, and to evaluate their own progress. However, the opportunity is not taken to further inform and involve older pupils, by telling them what they need to do to improve their work in the short term.
40. Assessment was identified as a key issue at the previous inspection. Satisfactory progress has been made in developing its use, so that it now makes a sound contribution to pupils' achievements. However more remains to be done and the school has identified this in its development plans. Staff meetings have been set aside to tackle assessment issues. Baseline assessments for children entering the reception class and statutory tests for Year 2 pupils are carried out, together with other formal assessments. Reading records, with use of general comments by parents and staff, are in place, but they are not evaluative. Teachers have adopted a system of target setting, with moderate and ambitious targets in the core subjects both for individuals and for groups, though these are not shared with pupils. Other assessments, such as the assessments at the end of units of work in the foundation subjects, are being used on a trial basis in some classes in the school. Compilation of portfolios of annotated work, to enable a shared understanding between staff of the levels at which pupils are attaining, has been commenced in science and in design technology, but not as yet for English. Teachers use the information they gather to help them know the needs of pupils and to group them appropriately, for instance when the Year 2 and 3 classes are regrouped for numeracy and literacy. They refer to what pupils have achieved one week when they plan for the next one. In science, assessment data has been used appropriately to identify gaps in pupils' understanding, and long term planning has subsequently been adjusted. However, there is not yet sufficient continuity in tracking individual achievement through the school. Consequently planning does not link fully to what pupils can and cannot already do. Although Information gained from baseline assessments is referred to in the planning meetings of the Early Years team effective planning for future developments for these young children is hindered by an inadequate understanding of the Early Learning Goals.
41. There is a need for a coherent approach for gathering and using assessment information and involving pupils in the process. This has been recognised by the school, which now has an



appropriate programme in place to extend teachers' understanding of assessment systems, to evaluate methods at present being trialled, and to identify agreed, effective whole school systems.

42. Good attention is given to other aspects of pupil welfare. Pupils appreciate the help and care shown by teachers. Any pupil who becomes injured or sick receives good attention. Good, well-understood arrangements are in place to follow up any child protection issues that arise. Both governors and staff give very good attention to health and safety procedures, to minimise risks and to allow school routines and learning activities to run safely.
43. Monitoring and promotion of attendance is satisfactory. Parents know that they are expected to bring children to school regularly and on time. Systems are in place to respond to any unjustified absence.

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

44. The good partnership with parents noted at the previous inspection has been maintained and extended. Parents appreciate the way the school provides for their children and make a very good contribution to its work.
45. Good efforts are made to build on parents' interest. They are supplied with a good flow of information about school events and concerns. Their views are taken into account in determining priorities for school development, resulting for instance in increased priority being given to expanding the range of extra-curricular activities available. Pupils' homework diaries are very thoughtfully designed, so that parents can see the week's homework and help to make sure it is done. Diaries also allow parents to be aware of the individual targets for improvement now being set every half term. Parents regularly hear their children read at home, and communicate with the school about this by adding comments to their reading records. There are appropriate consultation meetings where parents can discuss their child's work and progress with the class teacher. Routines for informing and involving parents of children with special educational needs are particularly good, enabling them to be fully involved in aiding their child's progress. Annual reports are overall satisfactory in the level of detail they supply, but their quality varies too much between classes. Some give very clear examples of what the pupil has learnt in each subject and of skills that have been developed. Others are too vague, tending to simply record activities that the pupil has experienced.
46. A good number of parents regularly add to pupils' progress by their help in school, for instance, by hearing reading. The Parent Teacher Association makes a considerable contribution through social and fund-raising activities, for instance by supplying the large play equipment installed in the playground.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The current head teacher has been in post for two years and has been responsible for much of the improvements since the previous inspection. She provides strong leadership, has a clear vision for the future and the right priorities for development. She is well supported by her deputy, also recently appointed and by staff with management responsibilities, including the senior management team and subject co-ordinators whose roles she is developing conscientiously and supportively. As found in the last inspection the school has a strong ethos with its aims and values being promoted well throughout its work. Relationships at all levels are very good. The school has a strong commitment to the promotion and maintenance of high standards and is not complacent.
48. In the last inspection report there was limited reference to the school's leadership apart from the positive leadership given by the governing body, which they continue to provide. The school development plan was described as lacking in clarity and limited in its usefulness. The judgement from the current inspection is that although the whole process of development planning is now good the success criteria are too general to permit rigorous monitoring. The school has worked very effectively on the key issues identified in the last report. Policies and schemes of work are now in place resulting in very good curricular opportunities for pupils. Pupils' performance in mathematics, geography and history at Key Stage 2 has been very effectively improved. Monitoring of teaching is a regular feature of the school and teaching has improved from sound overall to good, with sometimes very good features.
49. Although many of the subject co-ordinators are new to their roles they are committed to providing effective leadership and support to all staff, for example, through year group curricular meetings. Provision for English and mathematics is co-ordinated well; co-ordinators are fully aware of the development needs within their subjects and are providing these through their action plans. The special educational needs co-ordinator successfully organises their provision to ensure that support for pupils is well planned and organised to meet their needs.
50. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties thoughtfully and conscientiously. Governors are helping to shape the direction of the school through effective recruitment and close involvement in the school development planning process. Governors show their commitment to the school through their regular attendance at meetings and through structured visits to the school to look at particular subjects. For example, governors have visited the school to observe literacy and information technology in action and have provided detailed reports of their observations to the full governing body. The chair of governors is closely involved with the work of the school and has regular meetings with the head teacher to ensure he is informed of all matters involving the school's work.
51. The head teacher and deputy head teacher both monitor the quality of teaching throughout the school and have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. As yet they have not set specific targets for improving teaching quality but this is the next part of the process. All subject co-ordinators have been involved in monitoring the implementation of schemes of work, making adjustments and providing additional planning where appropriate. The school is in the process of moving from formal appraisal to performance management of staff and all the structures are in place for this to begin early in 2001. However, staff currently have appropriate professional development interviews to plan attendance at courses and inform their subject priorities for the school development plan.
52. The school's priorities for development are good and the school development plan is a very useful tool for implementing them. The process of involving all parties, including parents and children in establishing priorities is good and has ensured a good level of commitment to improvement. The main weakness in the school development plan is a lack of clearly measurable success criteria to help the school identify exactly what it has succeeded in doing.
53. The school makes satisfactory strategic use of adequate resources, including staff, equipment, books and accommodation, in order to promote pupils' learning. Financial decisions are based on a sound planning and development process. Financial control is satisfactory overall. Taking into

account additional grants and money raised by the PTA the school has an average amount of money to spend compared with schools nationally.

54. The school's development plan forms the basis for most spending decisions although costs are not formally indicated in the plan. As the plan unfolds, regular consultation between everyone concerned, including the local education authority, ensures that money is spent where it is going to be most useful in ensuring the pupils' education and welfare. At the same time there are simple systems to ensure that the school applies satisfactory principles for obtaining 'best value' for its spending. Grants for specific purposes, such as information technology or Special Educational Needs are used appropriately for their specific purpose. Although the accounting systems are not the most modern, the headteacher, secretary, finance officer and the governors' finance committee work hard to ensure an accurate, up to date picture of the schools finances is maintained. A recent independent audit of the school's finances raised a range of issues some of which, such as the lack of a current financial policy, the school is already tackling. Others, such as weaknesses in tracking or forecasting certain areas of the budget, have been noted and should be eliminated when the school employs better software and computer network links.
55. The school, along with parents and the governing body, is committed to keeping teaching groups as small as possible and at the same time employing the best teachers it can afford. There is a good number of well-qualified, enthusiastic and hard-working teachers and support staff. The ratio of pupils to teachers is below the national average. The school helps new teachers, especially the newly qualified, to fit in well with good induction, training and support.
56. The school buildings and grounds serve the school satisfactorily. The rooms are of a good size, well maintained, and the teachers ensure that displays are exciting and relevant. The multi-purpose school hall is rather on the small side for a school of this size. In addition to this, it also has to be used as a corridor from one side of the school to another and this causes disruption, particularly in bad weather. The quality and amount of resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory for the majority of subjects. They are good in mathematics, very good in music but unsatisfactory for the foundation stage. The under-fives do not have proper access to outdoor learning and outdoor apparatus is very limited. For the older pupils, the outdoor play areas and field are satisfactory. A 'wild' area and pond are properly fenced off and maintained. The school has an appropriate range of good quality books and teachers use these very well in the classroom or the library. The school has installed a suite of eight computers in an attractively designed and stimulatingly decorated resource area, which includes the library. This enables a whole class to use the space for a range of activities at the same time. From an early age, pupils have access to books, video, CD-ROMs and computers for research and enquiry. The timetable and the school's philosophy ensure that this happens on a regular, planned basis. Overall, the school's use of new technology is satisfactory. In this case, the pupils certainly come first, getting a better deal than the office staff, who do not yet have access to the Internet!
57. The school has made a good improvement since the last inspection. The deployment and development of staff meets the needs of all pupils very well, including those with special needs. Spending decisions are now linked to the school development plan, in which the governors are fully involved, and allow co-ordinators to work and plan more effectively for their subject areas.

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

In order to raise standards and enable pupils to make further progress, the governing body, head teacher and staff as a whole team need to: -

### **Improve provision and teaching for the under fives by**

- Providing an appropriate curriculum, which ensures there are opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play.
- Improving teacher's professional knowledge of how young children learn.
- Improving planning to include opportunities for independent learning.
- Improving classroom management and organisation.

Paragraphs:2,20,21,28,40,59,60,63,67,73

### **Improve assessment procedures by:**

- More clearly identifying where pupils are at in their learning in all subjects.
- Tracking the progress of individual pupils.
- Agreeing a whole school approach to assessment.

Paragraphs:23,40,41,86,126

### **Marking pupils work more evaluatively by:**

- Ensuring that all staff are clear about the next steps in pupil's learning so that they can make clear judgements through their marking which will help pupils understand what they need to do to improve.
- Involve pupils directly in the process

Paragraphs:23,86,96

### **In addition the school needs to:**

- Improve the quality of annual reports to parents to ensure greater consistency.(45)
- Ensure the school development plan has succinct and measurable success criteria.(47,52)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	20	43	25	7	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		166
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		25

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	2.6
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	12	18	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11 (18)	10 (17)	12 (18)
	Girls	18 (12)	18 (12)	17 (12)
	Total	29 (30)	28 (29)	29 (30)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (100)	93 (97)	97 (100)
	National	82 (82)	80 (83)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11 (18)	12 (18)	12 (18)
	Girls	18 (12)	17 (12)	18 (12)
	Total	29 (30)	29 (30)	30 (30)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (100)	97 (100)	100 (100)
	National	82 (82)	86 (86)	87 (87)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	161
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

**Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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 – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.5
Average class size	23.5

**Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	68.5

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	276379
Total expenditure	282860
Expenditure per pupil	1762
Balance brought forward from previous year	16023
Balance carried forward to next year	9542

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	144
Number of questionnaires returned	45

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	36	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	47	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	71	29	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	42	16	2	0
The teaching is good.	53	38	0	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	45	16	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	36	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	29	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	40	53	5	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	56	42	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	38	2	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	48	14	5	0



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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

58. Children in the Foundation Stage enter school in the September of the year in which they are five. This academic year, Reception children are in three vertically grouped classes with Year 1 pupils. Nearly all have had pre-school experiences. The school maintains very good links with the feeder nursery schools successfully ensuring a confident, smooth transition for children into mainstream school.
59. Children's baseline assessment results, of the knowledge and skills they bring with them into school, show the majority of children achieving standards above those expected for their age. Teachers use the baseline assessment results to set targets for the pupils' future learning and these are shared with parents early in the term. By the end of the Reception Year the majority of children will have reached the early learning goals rather than exceeded them. Progress is unsatisfactory in some areas of learning due to unsatisfactory teaching and provision.
60. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory due to the high level of unsatisfactory teaching in one class. Overall though, teachers' professional knowledge of how young children learn and the classroom organisation necessary to ensure they have the appropriate access to a variety of hands-on, independent, learning opportunities are under-developed. Planning lacks sufficient detail for Reception children and does not indicate how the school will provide for pupils' independent learning. At present, pupils mainly follow the curriculum for the Year 1 pupils and this is limiting the progress they make.
61. The Headteacher and Co-ordinator have already identified these issues and have requested specialist support and guidance from the Local Education Authority (LEA). The Foundation Stage is a priority in this year's School Development Plan. In order to improve the quality of teaching for the younger pupils immediately, while awaiting the external support, the co-ordinator has attended training on the requirements of the Foundation Stage and holds weekly meeting with the teaching team to discuss planning the appropriate learning opportunities. The headteacher and Reception teachers are strongly committed to getting the delivery of the curriculum right in order to promote the achievement of the Early Learning Goals

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

62. The majority of children enter the Reception classes with well-developed personal and social skills and, by the end of the Reception year, will have exceeded the Early Learning Goals in much of this area. Children play and work well together, co-operating with the older pupils in the classroom. They take part enthusiastically in all class and school activities and show respect for adults and peers alike. Children confidently engage adults in mature and interesting conversations, ranging from the importance of not smoking, to the enjoyment of reading about a wedding and the disappointment felt at never having been a pageboy. The calm, orderly school environment effectively promotes their confidence and emotional development and the clearly defined rules are fully understood. Children look forward to the Collective Worship on a Friday where awards are given for good work and/or behaviour. They talk eloquently about how good it feels to receive an award and can recount what others have received theirs for. Reception children show sensitivity to the needs of others in their community and are able to explain why the school's 95 year old pianist must be looked after and how special it is to have him in the school.
63. The whole school environment and ethos contributes well to this area of learning. However within the classrooms the teachers make insufficient use of well organised and interesting role play areas to enable children to take part in activities, develop their own ideas and make imaginative use of resources. They have limited opportunities to sustain and develop their ideas through this medium

and therefore make limited progress in this aspect. There is no specific planning in place for this area of learning. Teaching is satisfactory overall.

### **Communication, language and literacy skills**

64. The majority of children enter Reception with well-developed communications skills, and a very good vocabulary, which they use confidently. By the time they leave Reception the majority will have met the early learning goals and some pupils will have exceeded them. Progress in aspects of this area of learning is unsatisfactory.
65. Most children know their phonic sounds and letter names well. Many are good at using sounds to help them identify unknown words and all pupils are building up a good sight vocabulary. Children enjoy reading and do so with teachers, support assistants and parent helpers throughout the week. This additional support has a positive impact on the progress they make. Reception children take part in elements of the Literacy Hour and where teaching is satisfactory or better, they are involved, for a suitable length of time, in well planned tasks suitable to their abilities and needs, for example using printing, painting and play dough to make letters.
66. Children are learning to form their letters correctly and many produce writing that is well sized. They are presented with a variety of literary materials ranging from stories such as the Hungry Caterpillar, to poems about Christmas and factual information about old dolls and what they are made of. Children are generally well motivated and respond to the stories and information, asking questions, writing simple sentences and presenting work well. However there are too few opportunities for average and lower attaining pupils to have a go at using their knowledge of sounds in their writing or in order to develop a confident approach enabling them to tackle more complex words. They enjoy the opportunities to sequence stories using pictures. Displays around the classrooms and school show some Reception children's written work above the standard expected for children of this age. For example, poems written by pupils on Fireworks show imaginative ideas, simple phrases and carefully written and illustrated work.
67. Two out of the three lessons seen were satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, children spend too long sitting and listening to explanations and too much time following-up the lesson with a cutting, sticking or pasting activity with no specific literary or language outcome. Children become quickly distracted on these occasions and this affects the quality of the finished work as well as the progress they make.

### **Mathematical Development**

68. Most children enter the Reception Class able to count to 10 and beyond and many know the days of the week and name some shapes; square, triangle, circle. They are achieving above what is expected for their age. Children make satisfactory progress in their mathematical development and by the end of the Reception year most will have exceeded the Early Learning Goals. Children can sequence days of the week and name the two days that make-up the weekend. They can explain why they have capital letters, name the seasons of the year, count to 20 and many can count beyond. They add and take away in simple sums, respond to mathematical vocabulary such as who is first, last and read written numbers. They are also able to measure using non-standard units such as hands/cubes and tell the time using o'clock. Most teachers make good use of a variety of classroom situations to enhance pupils' competency in mathematics. For example, when registration occurs and someone is absent, pupils are asked how many are left in the class. Children also sing a variety of songs during the week, such as "Ten in the Bed" and "Monday, Tuesday", to consolidate mathematical work.
69. The teaching of mathematics ranges from very good to unsatisfactory and is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is very good, pupils are involved in tasks that are very well matched to their needs. They also receive a good level of teacher input. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, children are involved in time filling exercises that do not develop their understanding of number or mathematical concepts such as time.

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

70. Many Reception children have an extensive general knowledge and are able to link activities at school to what they have or see at home. For example, pupils brought in old dolls and bears from home and spoke confidently about who they belonged to, how old they were, how you can tell this by the material used and why they must be taken care of very carefully. Most know they live in a village and can describe the different ways pupils in their class come to school. The majority of children will exceed the Early Learning Goals in most aspects of this area before leaving the Reception class.
71. Pupils are given practical opportunities to experiment for themselves; for example, finding out which colours are best to wear in the dark and they demonstrate a real interest in what they see around them. There was a sense of 'awe' and fascination amongst pupils when they looked at a doll that was 130 years old. They had many questions they wanted to ask and statements they eagerly wanted to make, ranging from 'does it have a China face?' to 'you can buy old toys in a Charity Shop'. Children make limited use of computers or programmable toys in their classroom work .
72. Children make good progress in learning about the world around them when they are fully involved in well planned, practical tasks. Progress is unsatisfactory, however, when children receive too many facts, directly from the teacher, over too long a period of time. This also adversely affects their' concentration. Teaching ranges from sound to unsatisfactory and is satisfactory overall. Unsatisfactory teaching involves pupils in tasks poorly matched to their needs, with insufficient time spent with the teacher.

## **Physical development**

73. Children are given opportunities to develop their imagination, co-ordination and manipulative skills through specific physical education and music and movement lessons. They are able to throw and catch balls with a good level of accuracy, move beanbags around obstacles using bats and throw beanbags into buckets from a distance. They show good awareness of space and can jump and run showing good control and an awareness of the needs of others. Most know why they have to warm up before beginning a lesson and why they have to wear particular clothes. They also have opportunities to further develop safe control of their finer movements through activities such as using scissors.
74. There is, however, insufficient opportunity for Reception children to extend their physical development through daily access to an outdoor learning area with appropriate resources. This outdoor learning is over and above pupils' break-time. However, despite the lack of outdoor learning opportunities, pupils make good progress in developing their physical skills and by the time they leave Reception, they will have exceeded the Early Learning Goals.

## **Creative development**

75. Children are able to choose materials, confidently, suited to the task they are working on, and enjoy discussing their choices. For example, a girl explained that cotton wool was the best material to give her Father Christmas a 'curly wurly beard'. Children also show maturity in asking for clarification if they are unsure of their task rather than sit and wait for help. They often help each other in creative tasks, discuss what they are doing and remain very focused. Some pupils prefer to work on their own, demonstrating a high level of individual choice and concentration. The majority of children make good progress in developing their creative skills but those involved in a restricted creative curriculum make unsatisfactory progress. Two thirds of pupils are likely to exceed the early learning goals by the end of their Reception year.
76. They create interesting collages and textured work, as demonstrated in a display on the Flying Fish Story. They are able to use a good variety of materials such as feathers, glitter, wool and fabric as well as crayons, pastels, paints and pens. Children's drawings are well sized and self-portraits show many, detailed facial features. They enjoy whole class music lessons and many confidently clap rhythms and recognise and name a wide variety of percussion instruments. Pupils' creative

displays of self-portraits, plate collages, music and maths work are of a very high standard and teachers show the value they place on the work pupils do by displaying them attractively. Word-processing is well used to enhance the labelling for the displays and, overall, creative work has a significant impact on the quality of the pupils' learning environment.

77. Teaching ranges from good to unsatisfactory and is sound overall. Good teaching is exemplified by the encouragement of pupils' to complete individual work, supported by the making of individual choices about materials. Where teaching is unsatisfactory pupils have very limited opportunities to learn new, creative skills and spend time cutting, sticking or colouring.

## ENGLISH

78. Standards in English at both key stages are well above the national average and this is a good improvement since the last inspection. The school has fully implemented the Literacy Strategy and lessons across the school are well planned with a good focus on providing work to match the needs of pupils of differing ability. These initiatives have had a positive impact on standards.
79. In the Year 2000 national tests for seven year olds, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above in reading and writing was well above the national average and that of similar schools. Standards in reading have remained consistently high over a three-year period with minor variations year on year. Standards in writing, particularly at the higher Level 3, have improved this year. The school has worked hard to achieve this through a number of initiatives and the results are evidence of its success. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are making good progress.
80. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is well above expectations. They enter school with above average skills and the school builds successfully on these skills. All pupils listen extremely well in lessons across the curriculum and this is a significant factor in the progress they make. They listen well to their teachers and to each other and this enables them to answer questions in a relevant manner, often supporting this with a good level of detail.
81. Teachers make good use of technical vocabulary which pupils clearly understand. For example, in Year 1 the pupils quite clearly understood terms such as apostrophe and speech marks and were able to enter into appropriate discussions on their use within the text. By Year 2 pupils speak confidently using an extensive vocabulary and discuss the spellings and pronunciation of words in the recipe they are reading. Pupils in Key Stage 2 explain what they are doing in a clear and concise manner. They have a clear understanding of the main points under discussion and can adapt their language to the needs of the listener. The school makes good use of literacy sessions to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills through a wide variety of activities, including effective use of plenaries at the end of lessons. Year 4 pupils are encouraged to develop their speaking skills by making presentations. For example, Year 4 pupils talked to new parents about the "Story Sacks" they had made and answered questions asked of them by parents.
82. Attainment in reading is well above expectations. Pupils enter school with good pre-reading skills and through effective teaching and support from parents at home they make good gains in this area of learning. In the Year 2/3 classes good use is made of the literacy hour to support reading through well-structured group reading sessions. Pupils in Year 4 benefit from regular teaching activities involving the development of a variety of reading skills. For example, they select information from their fiction texts, complete word searches and practise reading parts from a play script to read to the class. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 read competently and have a good understanding of the reading material. However, their reading overall is mechanical. They have a fairly restricted reading diet and this hampers their ability to deal with a variety of texts, or to read texts fluently. Higher attaining Year 2 pupils discuss their favourite authors and books and describe their favourite characters, for example, the dog called 'Puddle' in Dick King-Smith's book. They understand the terms fiction and non fiction and know how to use the contents and index appropriately. Pupils in Year 3 continue to improve on their reading but the level of expression of average and lower attaining pupils is limited. However, by Year 4 pupils are reading fluently and with a good level of expression. They have access to a much wider variety of reading materials. Higher and average attaining pupils can talk

about the plot and the characters in the books they are reading. They particularly enjoy reading the "Harry Potter" books. Most pupils in Key Stage 2 are developing their information retrieval skills well. They know how to use non-fiction books, thesauruses and dictionaries effectively.

83. Attainment in writing is well above expectations and the school has worked hard to achieve this. However, generally pupils are much better at the mechanics of writing than at the creative aspects of it and this is linked to limited opportunities for extended writing activities and an incomplete understanding by teachers of what is needed to produce a creative piece of work. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils use capital letters and full stops fairly consistently and higher attaining pupils make some use of punctuation within sentences. Sometimes good use is made of adjectives, for example, "beautiful, blue shining pool". They occasionally start sentences with interesting vocabulary, for example, "Near by". Handwriting is generally not joined but letters are well formed and consistent in size. Spelling of a range of regular words is mostly correct. Lower attaining pupils generally write in simple sentences or those joined by the connector 'and'. By the end of Year 4 higher and average attaining pupils are beginning to use paragraphs to structure and develop their writing. They use vocabulary well to express feelings, for example, "trembling with fear". Punctuation within sentences is well established. Writing is well organised and ideas are developed logically. Spelling of regular and common polysyllabic words is generally correct. Handwriting is joined, fluent and well presented. Lower attaining pupils writing is less well developed. They are writing in simple sentences, correctly punctuated, involving a fair amount of repetition. Spellings of common words are generally correct. Handwriting and presentation across the school is improving as a result of some very effective handwriting teaching and the implementation of a handwriting scheme.
84. Progress is good as pupils move through the school and most pupils enjoy their literacy sessions. They show pride in their work and their behaviour is very good. In all lessons, they stay on task well during whole class and group work and are very keen to contribute to their lessons.
85. Teaching in both key stages is good. It is consistently good or better in Years 2, 3 and 4 and satisfactory in Year 1. Basic literacy skills are taught well across the school. In most classes teachers' subject knowledge is good and is used well to inform and improve pupils' knowledge and understanding. Questioning is used effectively to focus on important aspects of literacy, for example, in Year 4 to focus on the main features of instructional texts. Pupils make good gains in their learning through explaining what they mean and being further challenged, for example, when explaining how they deconstruct a word in order to pronounce it correctly. Most lessons contain a good level of challenge for pupils who contribute well. In almost all lessons pupils are managed well and with consideration and this gives them the confidence to contribute. The main weakness in the teaching in Year 1 is the high level of cutting and pasting activities, which have limited connection with the learning of English and contain limited challenge for the pupils.
86. English is well managed by the co-ordinator who is aware of the areas within the subject that still need developing. He has ensured the handwriting scheme has been implemented in order to improve the quality of handwriting and presentation skills and has ensured the effective implementation of literacy through monitoring teaching and teachers' planning. The school effectively uses information from test results to identify support and extension activities for pupils or to identify areas of weakness within the curriculum. However, there is no moderated portfolio of levels of work which is agreed by all teachers to ensure all staff have a clear understanding of the requirements for each level of attainment or to help teachers with their marking. Although targets for pupils are agreed half-termly these are not specifically related to English and no short-term targets are set as a result of marking in order to improve the quality of pupils' work. Reading records have limited value, as they are not based on a developmental profile of pupil's emerging and developing reading skills. However teachers in the Year 2/3 classes are beginning to employ a more diagnostic approach to pupils reading within the group reading sessions. The school has created a stimulating and inviting information centre. Books are displayed well and are in good order.
87. Literacy is used well across the curriculum, for example, in Year 2/3 when working on design sheets for packaging in design and technology or making booklets on the Pyramids in history. English makes a good contribution to social and moral development through the collaborative work

involved in the literacy hour and through the 'Reading Buddies' involving Year 4 pupils being partnered with younger pupils to support them in their reading.

## **MATHEMATICS**

88. The National Curriculum tests in the Year 2000 show pupils attaining standards well above the national average at the age of seven. In comparison with all schools and schools with similar characteristics, standards are also well above average. Inspection findings are similar to the test results. By the end of Year 4, when pupils leave the school, standards are above the national expectations in all aspects of the subject. This represents a significant improvement, particularly in Key Stage 2, since the last inspection. Years 2 and 3 are now grouped by ability for maths lessons and this is having a positive impact on the rate of pupils' progress, including those pupils with a special educational need. Pupils make very good progress in increasing their knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematics across the attainment targets. There are no significant variations between boys and girls over time. The trend in results in mathematics at Key Stage 1 is upwards. There is good improvement in attainment at Year 4
89. In Key Stage 1 pupils develop a good understanding of number and order confidently. Higher attaining Year 2 pupils are able to count using hundreds, tens and units and know the 'value' of each numeral. Pupils are also beginning to multiply and work with simple fractions. They have developed an enthusiasm for mental arithmetic and are eager to answer teachers' challenges. They enjoy working with a maths 'buddy' to work out problems and use mathematical language, when answering questions, confidently. Pupils can classify shapes, use o'clock and half-past to tell the time and measure accurately using centimetres. Classroom assistants are used effectively to support pupils with a special educational need and these pupils achieve standards in line with national expectations. Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in their learning.
90. In Years 3 and 4 pupils continue to learn at a good rate and they make good progress overall. They use graphs to effectively record information gathered in geography lessons, linking people, jobs and towns. They are able to measure accurately using standardised units, use money and give change, plot simple co-ordinates on maps, and use numbers confidently to add and subtract using hundreds, tens and units. They are also able to provide number facts, for example, 32 is 6 tens and 4 units divided by 2. Pupils are also able to recognise and name numbers up to 10,000, recognise doubles, such as  $20+20$  is the same as  $20 \times 2$ , and explain rotational symmetry and simple angles.
91. In Key Stage 1 teaching is good overall, but varies between unsatisfactory and very good. Characteristics of unsatisfactory teaching are lack of clarity of teacher's explanations, which confuses pupils and slows down their rate of learning and planning that is not detailed enough to show tasks that will challenge pupils' thinking. In Key Stage 2 teaching is very good overall. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are always very good, with interest, enthusiasm and high levels of concentration evident. Pupils listen attentively to the teacher's input and are confident to ask for explanations if they do not fully understand the concept or the tasks. Lessons all follow the numeracy strategy and in very good lessons a brisk pace, effective teacher probing and questioning, and a good match of work to pupils' needs, contribute positively to the good standards of teaching and learning observed. There has been a significant improvement, since the introduction of the numeracy hour, in pupils' skills and abilities in working out problems, mentally.
92. Teachers use mathematics effectively in many areas of the curriculum from explaining the term 'tertiary' in a music lesson, to measuring distances between places on a map, in Geography.
93. The co-ordinator manages the subject very well, and has a good knowledge of standards and the quality of teaching in the subject. She has had a positive impact on the successful introduction of the numeracy strategy. The co-ordinator has also introduced a number of additional schemes to support numeracy in the school in order to ensure that the higher attaining pupils are fully stretched. The co-ordinator recognises the need to reduce the number of worksheets pupils' use across the school and the inspection findings support this. She has also correctly identified the need to ensure pupils' independence is developed, alongside their skills' competencies. The co-

ordinator organised some Year 3 and Year 4 pupils to work with pupils from feeder Middle Schools in developing a Maths' trail in Alvechurch. This project was very successful.

## SCIENCE

94. The pupils' attainment in science at the end of Key Stage 1 is very high in comparison with similar schools and in comparison with schools nationally. All pupils reach the expected level in the teacher assessments and the percentage of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 is also very high. In the 2000 tests, the percentage of boys achieving level 3 was above average, whilst the percentage of girls achieving this level was very high, more than two and a half times the national percentage. The inspection broadly confirms these achievements, which are a very good improvement since the last inspection. The boys' and girls' results vary from year to year and the inspection found no significant differences at present.
95. The pupils begin Key Stage 1 with a good knowledge and understanding of the world and make good progress in developing their ability to observe and record scientific experiments. This is helped by their ability to read and write from an early age and also because the teachers' and parents' expectations are very high. Higher and average attaining pupils in Year 2 measure the strength of materials in Newtons and explain their findings. They know that some materials are stronger than others. They use a good range of vocabulary such as 'malleable' and 'opaque' to describe materials. By the time they leave the school, the pupils' attainment is still well above average, as their achievement continues to be good during Key Stage 2. During this stage, pupils are consolidating and broadening their knowledge and understanding in all areas of the curriculum. This is also helped by the high expectations and by the thoroughness with which the topics are covered. The level and quality of discussions that were observed during the inspection would not have seemed out of place in a middle school! Pupils have a good understanding of the difference between friction and water resistance. They can conduct a fair test and are able to draw appropriate conclusions.
96. The teaching is good at both key stages and is particularly effective in the Year 2/3 classes. There are very good features at all levels, such as a consistently high level of challenge and lessons that are very well planned and organised. The simple resources are employed very effectively and teachers give clear instructions that pupils at all levels can follow easily. There is some room for improvement, most especially in the Year R-1 classes and at Year 4, where teachers need to ensure that the needs of the youngest, least able or higher attainers are met more consistently. Pupils learn more in those lessons where the teacher takes care to provide work at different levels to suit all pupils. In a year R-1 lesson, for instance, the work of the Year 1 pupils was disrupted because the teacher had failed to provide appropriate activities for the younger pupils and they became restless and noisy. This made an unsatisfactory conclusion to a good piece of scientific enquiry. Nevertheless, all teachers know their pupils very well and are able to target specific help and encouragement where it is needed. In this way, pupils identified with special educational needs make good progress. With the help of the teacher and classroom assistants they are able to take a full part in the discussions and other class work. The marking of the pupils' books needs to be more purposeful. At present it is used largely for praise or correcting spelling. The use of homework to develop pupils' understanding is very good indeed. In Year 2/3 classes, pupils are asked to research topics using books and computers and to bring the results of their findings back to the lesson. In one class pupils had returned with a very high level of written work or detailed drawings, which could then be pasted straight into their science books.
97. Pupils thoroughly enjoy science. In a lesson about soil, there was great interest and excitement as pupils discovered that even the most unpromising pile revealed plants and animals when subjected to repeated sieving and then magnifying glasses. They are keen to learn and show what they know. Even the lower attaining pupils work hard to keep up with the pace of learning. The behaviour is consistently very good and from an early age, pupils are able to work amicably together, whilst older pupils collaborate, in groups, on more complicated experiments.
98. Although the science co-ordinator has only been in post for a few weeks she has inherited a good working curriculum, an effective planning process and colleagues who are hard working and

knowledgeable. With the help of the headteacher she has begun to monitor teaching and learning and already identified areas that need strengthening. She has a clear understanding of the assessment process, which is linked to the nationally based topic modules and can be used to identify future planning requirements. Teachers plan lessons together, discuss what worked or did not work and adjust their approach accordingly. A portfolio of pupils' work that teachers have graded together helps them.

99. Since the last inspection the school has made very good improvements in the quality of learning, assessment, scientific enquiry and work which is differentiated for pupils of differing ability. Because of the high level of commitment the school is very well placed to continue to improve.

## **ART**

100. Standards in art and design are above expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4. This is because the school values the personal development provided by creative activities which help to keep the curriculum broad and balanced. Pupils develop skills in drawing, painting and other forms of expression, linked to a good knowledge of art in a wider context, in Key Stage 1. This level of achievement continues during Key Stage 2 where pupils confidently create imaginative and sometimes disturbing dream sequences, for example, 'Locked in a first aid box'. They learn to develop and use a variety of printing techniques to express their ideas. There is less evidence of work in three dimensions although this is sometimes successfully linked to design and technology.
101. Teaching is generally good. The teachers give clear explanations and instructions, using a high level of technical vocabulary. The tasks are challenging. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils were shown techniques of shading and sketching in preparation for a printing process. The methods chosen engaged and interested the pupils and helped develop their imagination. Occasionally, as in a Year R/1 lesson, work is not always set which enables pupils of different age or ability to make progress. In this case, the Reception pupils received less planned attention and made less progress. Pupils enjoy art and design and listen carefully to instructions and follow them. In both the lessons observed the pupils were very well behaved and sensible.
102. The art curriculum and scheme of work follows national guidelines. The school takes care to explore art of different types and cultures which enrich the pupils' understanding. A display of some expressive animal masks by year 2-3 pupils, computer paintings exploring the work of Seurat by year 4 and expressive collage self-portraits by year R-1, are good examples. On the other hand, the planned tasks are sometimes too mechanical and do not enable the pupils to develop individual approaches. This was the case when art and design technology were combined in the manufacture of Christmas cards/pictures in year R/1. Good use is made in Key Stage 2 of sketchbooks, so that pupils build up a progression of examples. This can help in assessment of pupils' attainment.
103. The co-ordinator for art has only been in post for a few weeks and not yet had an opportunity to monitor teaching. She has been able to look at pupils' work in their sketchbooks and recent displays. There is no portfolio of graded examples of pupils' work to help with assessment, which is in early stages of development. The co-ordinator has inherited a scheme based on national guidelines but has not had recent training and is not yet confident in interpreting these.
104. Since the last inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress in raising standards by the consistent use of sketchbooks and a more imaginative coverage of the curriculum.



## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

105. Standards in design and technology are above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and average when the pupils leave at the end of Year 4. This is because the school is not realising its potential to deliver this subject as well as it does in other subjects of the curriculum. Although some challenging activities were observed in Key Stage 1 during the inspection, there was little evidence to show these being developed as the pupils got older. Since the previous inspection, there appears not to have been any improvement in opportunities for the exercise of creativity and individual originality and enterprise. This means that, at Key Stage 2 in particular, pupils are not achieving appropriate levels for their abilities.
106. Pupils in years 1 and 2 learn to design and make a range of things such as packaging, food and pop-up cards. Teachers take care to ensure that they provide appropriate objectives for pupils at different levels, especially in the mixed-age classes. In this way pupils learn a simple design process in line with the national curriculum. Pupils' skills in writing and discussion enable them to explore aesthetic and practical considerations. The use of information technology enhances this work considerably.
107. It was possible to observe only one design and technology class during the inspection so an overall judgement on teaching is not possible. It is clear that the design process is covered in both key stages as well as focussed practical tasks. In year R/1, some fascinating designs for pizzas in fabric collage, led on to making real ones. In an art lesson, pupils made Christmas designs with simple mechanisms to articulate parts of the picture. However, there is no evidence to show work with more complicated mechanisms or work in more resistant materials being developed later on. In years 2/3 pupils design packages, learning to improve their designs by adding more detail, clearer lettering and graphics. In year 4 pupils design and make purses in fabric, which are all very similar, and do not improve the achievement of these very able pupils as much as they might.
108. The co-ordinator for design and technology has only been in post for a few weeks and takes over at a time when the most emphasis is being placed on literacy and numeracy. However, she is experienced in the subject and keen to build on existing good practice. The scheme of work is based on national guidelines and the newly introduced scheme of assessment is beginning to provide useful information. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

109. There was limited opportunity to observe the teaching of geography during the inspection week. However, evidence gained from the scrutiny of pupils' work, discussion with pupils, teachers' planning and displays around the school show standards in geography to be above those expected of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards are also above average for pupils at the end of Year 4, when they leave the school. Pupils with a special educational need also make good progress. There has been a significant improvement in geography since the last inspection, particularly at Key Stage 2.
110. In discussion with Key Stage 1 pupils they were able to find the continent of Africa on a simple map and discuss animals and land conditions found there. For example, 'swamps have long grasses sometimes and water that looks like mushy water', 'skins used to be used for clothing and elephants were used to carry materials, like logs, to help people build things'. Pupils are also able to relate their work, in History, on old toys, to their geography topic, for example, 'Did you know toys in Africa are made of wood? Not all children in Africa have toys'. Pupils also know the difference between villages like Barnt Green, towns and cities like Birmingham. For example, Birmingham was described as 'massive'. Pupils can also name the countries that make up the United Kingdom. One boy also related his work to RE by asking, 'Have you heard of St David's City?' and went on to explain the length of journey Mary would have had to make and why the journey had to be made in the first place.

111. In Key Stage 2 pupils have undertaken surveys on transport, people, jobs and locations. They have also addressed environmental issues such as pollution and ways in which the local environment could be improved. Pupils can find Barnt Green on the map and are beginning to understand the purpose of different map scales and the level of local detail this can offer. For example, when a teacher was explaining where they could find details of the scale on the map, a pupil asked, 'does this mean we will be able to find our streets and houses?' Indeed, there was a sense of awe in the classroom when pupils realised that maps can show very large distances on 1 page of a map book.
112. In the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was good overall with some very good teaching. Where teaching was very good pupils were enthralled by the information unfurling before them and the knowledge that they were learning the skills that would enable them to find real places on the map and also measure how far the distance was as 'the crow flies'. Teachers have instilled a real interest in this subject and pupils show very good levels of concentration and interest, frequently asking questions to extend their knowledge. For example, 'does red represent small roads on the map? Is the blue for our nearest motorway the M42?' They show very well developed personal skills when working with peers on tasks that require taking turns and sharing.
113. The management of the geography curriculum is satisfactory. Good use has been made of the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's Guidelines on teaching geography and there is a two-year rolling programme of topics to ensure all aspects are covered. The co-ordinator has extended the resources and ensured they are gathered in a way that makes them easily accessible for all staff. The school is involved in a pilot programme for assessment of the Foundation Subjects and the co-ordinator is working on acquiring a portfolio of pupils' geography work. The co-ordinator has also begun to monitor the quality of teaching in the subject but this needs further development to ensure a full understanding of the levels pupils are attaining across the year groups.

## **HISTORY**

114. From the lessons seen the scrutiny of work and teachers planning pupil's attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Year 4 is above expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
115. In Key Stage 1 the younger pupils know the difference between toys of long ago and now. They know that movement in dolls is modern and that old dolls have china faces. They demonstrate their emerging sense of chronology by creating their own timetable of bears from very old (belonging to Great Gran) to new (belonging to them). Many can use every day terms such as "long ago", "old" and "new" appropriately. Pupils in Year 2 carry out research on the lives of the Ancient Egyptians using a range of secondary sources such as newspapers, information technology sources, books and artefacts. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the Ancient Egyptians as a result.
116. By Year 4 pupils have a good understanding of the life and times of the Anglo Saxons and make comparisons between their lifestyle and their own. They know that the Anglo Saxons had many gods and therefore were not Christians. Many know that archaeologists found an Anglo-Saxon boat and as a result we know a great deal more about their lives. When looking at a video concerning this, most were able to extract the most important historical information about Anglo- Saxon life.
117. In the lessons seen the teaching varied between satisfactory and good but overall the evidence from the scrutiny indicates that in most classes the subject is well taught and pupils make good progress. The main weakness in the teaching seen was the length of the direct teaching sessions in Year 1, which led to boredom in some pupils.
118. Good use is made of visits and visitors to support the work in history. For example, older members of the community come into the school to talk to the children about the toys they had and Year 4 pupils visit Charlccote Park and Harvington Hall as part of their work on Tudors.
119. Pupils use their literacy skills effectively in history, for example, in Year 3 when writing about the role of an archaeologist discovering the Pyramids. Homework is used effectively to encourage the development of literacy skills through history such as when in Year 4 pupils write about their homes over time; tracking the developments and changes.

120. The subject is led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who supports her colleagues well in the delivery of the history curriculum.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

121. Standards in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) are average overall and have been maintained since the last inspection. The number and range of opportunities to involve pupils with the subject have kept pace with the increasing demands of the curriculum.

122. The pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average. Most pupils can type text into a word processor and edit it, or add text to their picture in a paint or design package. Pupils can organise instructions to make simple shapes or follow a course with a floor or screen robot. They are comfortable with using the computer as an everyday tool. This is because all the teachers use information technology to enhance learning effectively in a range of curriculum subjects, including English, mathematics, art and science. Year 2/3 pupils have produced some very good work using computers to produce graphs of a survey done in geography.

123. By the time they leave the school, the pupils' attainment is average. It is apparent from talking to the co-ordinator, other staff and pupils that the school's recent acquisition of a computer suite to replace ageing equipment has resulted in a steep 'learning curve' for all. The development of ICT skills for year 4 pupils' is similar to pupils in years 2/3. However, achievement is set to improve as the current high level of learning sets the standard for future years. Similarly, although the school now has an Internet connection, the use of the Worldwide Web and e-mail have yet to feature regularly in the planning.

124. Only two ICT lessons were observed during the inspection and these were good. The teachers planned the lessons carefully to offer pupils a range of learning objectives at different levels. A year 2/3 lesson involved pupils using a computer to help design a cereal packet. Pupils used the computer confidently, selecting tools from a menu. The higher attaining pupils were able to save their work and print it out without help. A year 4 lesson combined objectives in English, history and ICT. Pupils explored the computer-painting program and used a word-processor to produce a list of instructions for making a picture. Other pupils developed research skills using history books. In both lessons, pupils of all abilities worked enthusiastically and determinedly and made good progress. They co-operated or collaborated very effectively and were excited by their achievements. Despite the complexity of the arrangements for moving classes to the library resource area, for sharing computers and mixing different activities, the classes ran smoothly. This was because the teachers organised and managed the pupils very well and because of the very good behaviour and understanding of the pupils.

125. Teachers are knowledgeable and are able to demonstrate ICT skills to pupils effectively. They understand the value of information technology for research, for drafting and redrafting and for giving pupils the opportunity to produce work in a range of different styles and formats. Teachers also value the possibilities offered by simpler technology such as video or sound recorders, which are also used regularly. There is a very good, shared determination and commitment to improving the standards in ICT. The school uses the timetable flexibly, bringing classes together for team teaching and taking every opportunity to use computers, for instance at lunchtime or after school. Teachers plan together well, especially in years 2/3 and this helps the delivery of the curriculum to be coherent.

126. The co-ordinator has been able to monitor teaching and learning to identify strengths and weaknesses. ICT follows the national guidelines in its scheme of work and this, along with the school's policy on assessment, is beginning to prove useful in measuring pupils' attainment. Although this is an improvement since the last inspection, it is not yet providing sufficiently accurate information in order to help plan future developments. Nor has it had an effect on reports, which although they now show ICT separately, at present give insufficient information to parents about the pupils' attainment.

## MUSIC

127. The delivery of the music curriculum and the standards attained by pupils are outstanding. Standards in music, throughout the school, are well above the national average for both Key Stages. Much of this is attributed to the excellent teaching of specialist music teachers. This teaching challenges pupils' standards of both singing and performing. The music specialists empower pupils to try everything, whether following a score or working out the temp of a piece of music and enable them to attain standards above what many feel they are able to achieve. There is a sense of real achievement amongst many pupils and a confidence usually attributed to older musicians. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their learning since the last inspection.
128. Pupils sing tunefully, with real enjoyment, and this enhances the school's Collective Worship times. There was a spiritual quality to the pupils' singing of *Away in a Manger*. In Key Stage 1 pupils are able to describe the difference between musical instruments, such as clarinet and flute, and compare the sound each makes. They know which instrument makes the lower sound. Pupils listen carefully to pieces of music and confidently try and work out the timing. They are also able to identify the solo instrument in pieces, such as the oboe, and are encouraged to draw on their previous learning to help them. For example, 'listen carefully and see if you can identify the instrument we heard last week.' Pupils correctly identified the viola. Pupils can repeat complicated rhythms; adding different actions to make it more complicated and use them to accompany their singing.
129. At Key Stage 2 pupils are learning to accurately identify the different timings of pieces of music, with the teacher giving helpful 'tips' to make this easier for pupils having difficulty. For example, 'listen for the heavier note and count from there'. Pupils can name and recognise minims, crotchets and quavers; they know their value and the purpose of a musical rest. They also know the musical terms piano (quiet) and forte (loud), DS (go back to the sign) and DC (go back to the beginning) and are able to obey the instructions when playing their instruments. All pupils in Year 3 were able to play un-tuned instruments, following a score for a waltz, broken down into four specific sections for drums, bells, tambourine and claves. Class teachers effectively support pupils during this demanding time and ensure that all pupils, including those with a special educational need maintain a high standard of performance.
130. Teachers make very good use of every opportunity to extend pupils' cultural and general knowledge by linking, whenever possible, to different aspects of the curriculum such as geography and history. Pupils' attention was drawn to the names of composers, the land of their birth, and when they were born, for example, Brahms, the composer of the waltz they were rehearsing. Teachers also encourage pupils to reflect on the quality of their performance and ways in which they can improve it. Detailed planning, with very clear, demanding learning objectives, is one of the reasons pupils make such very good progress in their learning. The other is the excellent subject knowledge and teaching strategies deployed by the specialists. Pupils' enjoyment and pride in their achievements are evident, as is their high level of concentration throughout lessons.
131. The subject is very well managed, with the co-ordinator working very closely with the specialists in ensuring the school's Scheme of Work incorporates all the requirements of Curriculum 2000. The co-ordinator also monitors the delivery of music across the school and meets with the governor responsible for Music, to ensure a full understanding of how the music curriculum is taught. Support is also given in the area of planning.
132. The music curriculum, along with pupils' personal, social and cultural development is enhanced by the school's choir, supported by the co-ordinator, the school's involvement in the First Schools' Music Festival, singing in Church and singing at a local Old People's Home. All pupils in the school have the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument. This is a significant achievement. Pupils learning to play the violin also play during the class lessons.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils attain standards above expectations. Only one lesson was seen in Year 4 and this was for games. Pupils achieved well above expectations in this aspect of physical education.
134. Pupils in Year 1 follow instructions carefully and respond promptly to instructions to stop. They are already aware of some of the effects of exercise on their bodies, for example, that warming up causes their hearts to beat faster. In games activities they throw and catch balls, throw bean bags into buckets and balance bean bags on their heads. Through practice they increase their level of accuracy in all of these activities. Pupils in the Year 2/3 classes understand how to exercise safely, move quickly and sensibly within a space and make simple observations on the quality of their work. They combine balance and movement sequences effectively and, through practice, with increasing smoothness and efficiency. By Year 4 pupils link skills and techniques they have learned very effectively to play Bench Ball. They demonstrate very good levels of skill, co-ordination and control in order to play the game. They take part in the game sensibly and demonstrate very sportsman like attitudes as well as a strongly competitive approach. When commenting on the work of the teams, pupils make pertinent comments on their observations, for example, 'attack more', 'pass the ball more quickly' and 'throw more accurately'.
135. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 have regular swimming lessons that are well managed by a good number of qualified swimming instructors. This is supported by good assessment procedures to ensure swimming developments are clearly targeted at the pupil's needs. Safety procedures are in place and these are checked by the co-ordinator and by staff at Bromsgrove Swimming Pool.
136. The teaching of physical education is good and sometimes very good. Lessons are well planned and have a good structure. They are well organised and managed with a good focus on skill development and as a result pupils are keen, motivated and anxious to learn. Questioning is used well, for example, to focus on different aspects of movement such a speed, direction and shape.
137. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic and well-qualified co-ordinator. She is keen to further develop the subject through a range of extra curricular sporting activities such as netball, football and country dancing and pupil up-take for this has been good. The residential outdoor adventure trip to Malvern for Year 3 pupils along with the extra curricular sports activities effectively supports the curriculum. Resources for physical education are variable. They are adequate for small games and gymnastics work but the large apparatus is totally inadequate for the needs of pupils across the age range. The school has joined the Top Sports Scheme and will acquire additional resources as a result.