

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WILKINSON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bilston, West Midlands

LEA area: Wolverhampton

Unique reference number: 104325

Headteacher: Mr. P. Staley

Reporting inspector: Mrs. B. Iles  
12000

Dates of inspection: 16/10/00 – 19/10/00

Inspection number: 225147

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Walter Road Bradley Bilston West Midlands
Postcode:	WV14 8UR
Telephone number:	01902 558971
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr. T. H. Turner
Date of previous inspection:	27/01/97

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Brenda Iles	Registered inspector	English	What sort of school is it?
		Art	Standards: the school's results and pupils' achievements
			What should the school do to improve further?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Richard Barnard	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Brian Aldridge	Team inspector	Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
		Mathematics	
		Design and technology	
		Physical education	
Carol Cressey	Team inspector	Under fives	How well does the school care for its pupils?
		English as an additional language	
		Information technology	
		Music	
David White	Team inspector	Equal opportunities	
		Science	
		Geography	
		History	
		Religious education	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Wilkinson Primary School serves the local community of Bradley and the area of Bilston in Wolverhampton. The majority of pupils live in the surrounding area although a growing number attend the school from outside the reserved area as the school grows in popularity. Most families live in rented housing and fewer than usual parents have higher education qualifications. Pupils are admitted to the reception class at the start of the year in which they become five. Attainment on entry is well below the local average in language, mathematics and knowledge of the world around them.

Three hundred and one girls and boys aged from four to eleven attend the school, which is larger than usual for its type. Fifty-six children attend the nursery on a part time basis and 126 children were under the age of six at the time of the inspection. Sixteen per cent of pupils take free school meals although over sixteen per cent are entitled to this support. A handful of pupils come from backgrounds beyond Europe but none speaks English as an additional language. Seventy-four pupils are on the register of special educational needs, which is above average, and one pupil has a statement.

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

This is a very effective and rapidly improving school with many significant strengths and very few weaknesses. Very good teaching enables pupils to make good overall progress and achieve standards that are average in English and above average in mathematics and science by the age of eleven. The excellent understanding of the needs of the community supports the development of strong relationships and fosters partnership in learning. The school is very well led and managed, offers a very good quality of education and provides very good value for money.

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

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and has a very good partnership with senior staff and governors.
- Teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 is of a very high standard.
- Children make good progress in relation to their attainment when they start school.
- Behaviour, relationships and attitudes to learning are excellent.
- The ethos and care provided are excellent

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

- The quality of spoken English.
- Standards in writing.

*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 January 1997. Since then, standards have improved, the quality of teaching is better throughout the school and leadership and management are now very good rather than good. Very good progress has been made in addressing the weaknesses highlighted in the last inspection; monitoring arrangements are now very good, pupils have a wide range of opportunities to develop creativity through subjects such as design and technology, music and art, and standards in design and technology are now appropriate for the age range.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	C	B	C	D
Mathematics	C	B	C	C
Science	C	B	B	B

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

Results over the last four years have improved broadly in line with the national trends. When compared to similar schools pupils' performance is below average in English but the formula for calculating this grade does not take account of the very low level of language of many pupils when they start school and factors of social deprivation. Many families receiving income support do not take up their free school meal entitlement. The unconfirmed test results for 2000 show a dip in the proportion of pupils achieving average levels in mathematics and science. However, significantly more pupils attained the higher level 5 in English, mathematics and science. This cohort had higher proportions of more able pupils and pupils with special educational needs. In addition, almost a quarter of pupils joined the class at times other than the usual admission time. Achievements matched the targets set by the school based on prior attainment but fell below the challenging target set for mathematics.

Inspection evidence shows that the standards attained by eleven-year-olds are average in English and above average in mathematics and science. Standards in other subjects generally match age-related expectations except in art, music and religious education where they are above average. Overall, measured against their prior attainment, pupils make good progress in the foundation stage and the juniors and satisfactory progress in the infants.

Weaknesses in spoken English are reflected in the quality of independent writing. The limited range of vocabulary of many pupils creates difficulties in self-expression. They are introduced to a broad range of vocabulary in the foundation years and infants. This is reinforced and extended in the juniors, enabling pupils to reach broadly average levels by the age of eleven. However, speaking and writing remain areas for further development to raise standards higher.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils love school and are excited by their learning opportunities
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is excellent.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very strong and personal development is very good.
Attendance	Attendance is below average.



The care shown to pupils is of the highest standard. The excellent relationships, commitment to high expectations and desire for pupils to achieve their best, result in a love of learning and ambition to succeed. The regular absence of a small proportion of pupils is rigorously pursued to encourage regular attendance.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Examples of excellent teaching were observed in one fifth of lessons in Years 4, 5 and 6. Just over a third of all lessons are very good, a further third are good and the remainder are satisfactory. Literacy and numeracy are taught effectively and pupils are fully challenged. High levels of expectation, subject expertise and knowledge of pupils support learning well. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is of very good quality and offers practical and exciting opportunities in all subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for personal, social and moral development is excellent; for spiritual and cultural development it is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Care is excellent and a significant strength of the school.

The excellent relationships the school has with parents and the community support a strong learning partnership that has a very positive impact on attitudes to learning and citizenship. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities that enhances provision.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. The very strong partnership with senior staff provides clear direction for improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors offer a high level of commitment and good support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Self-evaluation through rigorous monitoring is of a very high standard.
The strategic use of	Good use is made of available resources to improve standards.

resources	
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The headteacher provides strong, effective leadership and is highly respected within the community. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate. New classrooms enhance provision for the infants but junior classrooms are cramped. There is no space for a computer suite and the library and office are barely adequate. The principles of best value are applied well.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• The headteacher provides excellent leadership.</li> <li>• Problems and suggestions are taken seriously and acted upon.</li> <li>• Children love school and are very well behaved.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very small proportion of parents tend to disagree with the amount of homework pupils receive.</li> <li>• A very small proportion would like more information about their children's progress.</li> </ul>

Inspectors support parents' very positive responses to the school's work. The homework pupils receive is imaginative, practical and well supported by school resources. It is appropriate for the age range and enhances learning. Reports are of very good quality and the school's open door policy enables parents to talk to teachers about their children's progress at times other than termly open evenings.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In the 1999 tests for eleven-year-olds pupils' attainment was average in English and mathematics and above average in science. When compared to similar schools, performance was above average in science, average in mathematics and below average in English. The most recent test results for this age group show a significant increase in the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels in English and science because the proportion of more able pupils in that cohort was higher than usual. However, targets in mathematics have not been met because the proportion of pupils with special educational needs, especially in mathematics, was also higher. The incidence of pupil mobility and entitlement to free school meals was also higher than usual in the 2000 cohort. Taking into account achievements over four years, the trend is improving and is similar to national trends.
2. Many children start school with very limited experiences of language, number and understanding of their environment. The very good teaching they receive enables them to make good progress but many children do not achieve the expectations of the national early learning goals in language and literacy, particularly in their communication skills. This inhibits their ability to express their knowledge and understanding of the world and the mathematical aspects of their learning.
3. Results in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 1999 were average in reading, below average in writing and well below average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools they were below average in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics. Over a period of four years, seven-year-old boys attained higher levels than girls of the same age in mathematics and writing. Pupils make good progress in relation to their low starting points in language and mathematics because the quality of teaching is good and they are well challenged. Thirty-four per cent of pupils achieved the higher level 3 in reading in 1999 and in mathematics the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level was close to average. Limited language skills inhibit achievement at the higher levels in mathematics and independent writing. No pupils attained level 3 in writing and very few attained the higher level in mathematics. The most recent results in reading and mathematics are similar to those of 1999 with a slight improvement in writing.
4. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in speaking and writing remain below average by the age of seven but in reading, mathematics and science they are average. When teachers ask searching questions, pupils show greater understanding and knowledge than their written work and test results often reflect. In the juniors pupils become more confident to use a wider range of vocabulary in lessons and they make good progress. By the time they are eleven, attainment is about average in all aspects of English. In mathematics and science it is above average. Achievements in information technology, design and technology, history and geography are average overall although pupils continue to need support and encouragement to present their work using Standard English. The issue raised in the last inspection has been addressed and standards in design and technology have improved to an appropriate level for the age range. Standards in art and music are above the expected levels at the ages of seven and eleven and are strengths. Attainment in religious education exceeds the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for eleven-year-olds. These achievements reflect the very high quality of teaching in the juniors that enables pupils to make very good progress. The high expectations teachers have of pupils together with the meaningful practical links made to daily life enable pupils to understand the relevance of their learning. Consequently pupils are well motivated to learn.

5. Extensive effort has supported improvements in reading since the school was last inspected. By the age of seven pupils enjoy a good range of stories, poems and information books. Although many rely only on school resources, they are enthusiastic and know the purpose of these different types of text. They make good use of phonics and pictures to decode new vocabulary. Higher attainers read fluently and expressively but those who are less skilled need support to read with expression and to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words. By the age of eleven, pupils' reading is fluent and they use their skills to research information. They understand how to use the library and make comparisons between the styles of different authors introduced through the literacy hour. The weaknesses in English relate to speaking skills. Pupils of all ages find it hard to use Standard English in their speech and writing and require adult support. By the age of eleven, standards meet the requirements for the age range when teachers require pupils to speak in formal situations and to answer questions in sentences. Writing meets age related expectations overall by the age of eleven but when writing independently, without adult support, pupils continue to use a restricted range of language and writing reflects patterns of speech which are not always grammatically correct. These are weaknesses for the school to address.
6. In mathematics seven-year-olds count forward and backward accurately, using numbers beyond 20 and understand the mathematical symbols that represent the four rules of number. In their work on measures pupils use metres and centimetres and non-standard units, such as hand spans, when measuring objects. They have opportunities to collect data and represent the results in graphs. Investigative skills are linked to every day experiences. This supports learning well because pupils understand how their skills and knowledge can be used in a range of situations. Good links are made to science as pupils learn to predict outcomes and to calculate exact figures. By the age of eleven pupils have a good understanding of number and mental mathematics is a strength of the provision. These elements of the numeracy lessons are particularly brisk and support learning effectively. The rigour of these sessions encourages pupils to think quickly and to answer questions with confidence. They have a secure understanding of the four rules of number and good knowledge of tables. Pupils describe how they arrive at their answers, for example when doubling and halving. They apply their skills well to other subjects, for example linking symmetrical patterns to art and work on co-ordinates to geography. Numeracy skills are applied well across subjects. Standards observed in Y6 are higher than those in the last set of tests. This is due to differences between cohorts. There was a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs in mathematics in the last cohort and this affected the overall test results.
7. The practical approach to teaching science enables pupils to develop a good understanding of investigative processes linked to meaningful experiences. In their study of electricity, Year 2 pupils identify sources of electricity and how household appliances are powered. They construct simple circuits to light a bulb, and make predictions, for example, when sorting and testing materials for conductivity. Because teachers explain clearly the lesson objectives pupils have a clear understanding of the purpose of their learning and the time they have to complete tasks. Lessons build well on prior learning and consequently pupils make good progress, for example, older pupils show their understanding of reflection through the accurate classification of reflective and non-reflective materials and descriptions of angles of reflection. Year 5 pupils apply their knowledge of forces when measuring and recording the force required to move a brick over a variety of surfaces accurately. Eleven-year-olds apply their understanding of the properties of materials to separate them using magnetism, floating, sieving, filtering and evaporation techniques to separate staples, polystyrene, stones, sand and salt successfully. Through the good encouragement pupils receive to take responsibility for their learning and to evaluate their work pupils plan experiments, monitor their activities and adapt their ideas to fulfil the task objectives.
8. Skills in information and communication technology are appropriate for the age range. By the age of seven, pupils have learned to word process independently, entering information and changing the size of letters and font. They move text, save work, retrieve and print. Year 2 pupils use a digital camera with adult support. A strength of the

provision is the opportunities pupils have to link the skills they learn across subjects. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 save data from surveys and access information to add or change data. They understand the importance of inputting accurate information into a database in order to rely on the validity of graphs and charts. Because skills are taught through meaningful practical experiences pupils understand the importance of technology in every day life. By Year 6 pupils are becoming very confident users of CD-ROMs and the Internet. They independently access web sites, storing and downloading useful information in a range of subjects. Pupils also have opportunities to use their word processing skills for a variety of purposes such as writing prayers, planning and recording interviews, and writing character descriptions and this supports learning well.

9. In religious education pupils develop a good knowledge of the major world faiths and, by the age of eleven, attain standards higher than those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Through the study of world religions pupils develop a good understanding of faiths such as Judaism and identify similarities and differences between the Jewish faith and Christianity. Teachers make good use of resources and pupils know the symbols of each faith and specific aspects of prayer and worship.
10. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in the infants and good progress in the juniors. The co-ordinator, teachers and special needs support assistants devise individual education plans that have appropriate and clear targets that address the pupils' difficulties effectively. Higher attaining pupils are also well challenged and the issue to improve the progress of this group of pupils has been addressed well.

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

11. Pupils' attitudes to learning, behaviour and personal development are excellent and make a significant contribution to their achievements. This shows good improvement since the last inspection. They enjoy coming to their school, are excited by the learning opportunities provided and strive hard to do their best. Attitudes to learning in lessons are very good throughout the school but are consistently excellent in Years 4, 5 and 6. This has a major impact on the rate of progress pupils make in lessons.
12. The youngest pupils in the nursery and reception classes settle quickly into daily routines. They sustain involvement in activities such as building models with Lego, working at the computer or making recognisable models of houses or trains. They thoroughly enjoy outdoor play activities, for example, sharing bikes well and manoeuvring them to avoid each other.
13. Pupils contribute enthusiastically in lessons and take turns well when answering questions. As pupils move through the school their attitudes in lessons improve to an exceptionally high standard by the time they leave. They show excellent levels of concentration and remain interested in their work for the whole of the lesson. For example, in a Year 4 physical education lesson pupils' hard effort and concentration ensured a very high standard of performance, including a very good awareness of safety, when using large apparatus. In an English lesson, comparing and contrasting poems they stayed on task for every second; every pupil was eager, excited and desperate to contribute.
14. Pupils strive to do their best all of the time. Behaviour in lessons, assemblies, around the school and in the playground is excellent. Last year's single exclusion was the only one in the last twenty years. Pupils are extremely polite, caring and well mannered. The lack of aggressive behaviour is a significant feature of the school. Pupils know the school rules and respect them well. Their understanding of the feelings and needs of others is exceptional. For example, in a Year 5 design and technology lesson when testing a bridge, pupils moved automatically to allow others to see; in a Year 6 art lesson there were gasps of appreciation for the work of the special educational needs group.

15. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. At lunchtimes older pupils naturally help the younger ones, encouraging them to eat their lunches. Pupils work together extremely well in pairs and groups and this co-operation has a very positive impact on their learning.
16. Pupils' personal development is excellent. They undertake a wide range of tasks, such as setting up equipment, in a keen and sensible manner from an early age. Older pupils show great responsibility in a range of areas, for example, in helping daily with the sale of tuck. Contributions to assemblies are outstanding; Year 5 pupils were superb in taking responsibility for presenting an excellent assembly and on another occasion a Year 6 pupil took the lead by asking questions of the audience. Pupils respond with great enthusiasm to the very good range of extra-curricular activities. They are particularly keen and successful in team games.

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

17. Teaching is a strength of the school. Two out of ten lessons are excellent in the juniors and a further three lessons in ten are very good. Across all age groups three quarters of lessons are of at least good quality. The excellent teaching in the juniors is the reason why pupils make very good progress in their learning in Years 4, 5 and 6. Teachers have very good subject knowledge across the breadth of the curriculum and all lessons are planned in meticulous detail to ensure an impressive balance of review, extension and reinforcement. Objectives are very precise and, particularly for literacy and numeracy, they are displayed at the front of the class to remind pupils of the focus of these aspects of learning during each week. Consequently, pupils are very clear about the areas of work to which they are going to be introduced.
18. A feature of this consistently high standard of teaching is the positive way teachers talk to pupils. When introducing them to new ideas they take time to describe the purpose of the learning and link it to experiences, which are exciting and fun. Consequently, attitudes to lessons are excellent. Teachers consistently value the responses of all pupils and this leads to a very high level of trust and respect and very strong, positive relationships. This was apparent in a literacy lesson in Year 4. Pupils returned from play eager to listen to the teacher and to learn. The teacher's excellent reading of poetry caused pupils to gasp as they responded to the mood. They loved the humour of another poem, 'Elephantasia' and quietly modelled the teacher's expression, independently trying to create the same level of interest in their own reading. Although they found the follow-up writing task hard, they all succeeded because the resources offered the appropriate level of challenge and support to secure success. Less able pupils recorded homophones using pictures and words while more able pupils worked with text, substituting words to create new poems. By the end of the session all pupils understood the meaning of the technical terms although not all pupils were able to use the term in their responses.
19. The pace in these lessons is very brisk. Teachers achieve the pace by providing a skilful balance of new knowledge, skill development and interactive questioning. This ensures all pupils are fully engaged in class discussions. They know they will be expected to contribute and that their tasks will build on the lesson introductions and their prior learning. Teachers make very good links between subjects, ensuring that learning is meaningful and pupils apply their skills and knowledge across the curriculum, for example, reinforcing the language of mathematics through patterning in art and counting in music. They provide opportunities for features of writing introduced through the literacy hour to be practised, such as note taking in science and poetry writing in history. The very good subject knowledge of teachers in subjects such as music and art has a positive influence on learning. In a lesson in Year 4 the teacher skilfully enabled all pupils to print dream sequences using fabric and paint, discussed with them how their prints could improved and expected them to describe the outcomes to the class in the plenary. In a music lesson with pupils in Years 1 and 2 the teacher made very good use of time, balancing activities to include singing, the extension of vocabulary and opportunities to compose and perform simple sequences of sound using percussion. Because the pace

was brisk pupils maintained very high levels of concentration and cooperated together very well to achieve the high expectations made of them. The teaching of religious education is also well linked to literacy. The focus on reading a range of stories from world religions and the occasional performances of these stories in assembly supports cultural development and understanding very well. Because significant focus is placed on requiring pupils to develop reasons for their ideas and opinions teachers make good use of stories such as Rama and Sita, The Tiger and the Brahmin and those which describe the life of Jesus to enable pupils to make comparisons between beliefs and cultures and to develop respect for a range of ideas.

20. Teaching in the infants is of good quality but lessons do not have the same consistent degree of rigour. One of the main differences between good and excellent teaching is the expectation of pupils to speak in well-structured sentences that are clearly and accurately articulated. While teachers provide good role models for pupils and extend pupils' language experiences, they do not always require them to use new words in their answers and this affects their attainment in writing. Younger pupils need considerable support and reinforcement to use technical terms. Limited language inhibits achievement in independent writing and this is why no pupils attained the higher level 3 in the national tests for seven-year-olds. Expectations of speaking skills are not consistently sufficiently high to support progress at a faster rate. To raise standards higher all teachers need to plan opportunities and time for pupils to present their ideas independently. Time is not planned for pupils to prepare presentations in feedback sessions. This leads to inaccuracies in speech which are rightly not corrected publicly but which remain weaknesses in learning. During the inspection, teachers began to change their approach and the level of accuracy began to improve.
21. Where standards of speaking are higher, in Years 5 and 6, pupils have benefited from consistent reinforcement of the use of accurate speech and consequently they achieve appropriate standards in their presentations. In addition, they apply this use of Standard English to writing, which leads to a higher level of accuracy in their independent work.
22. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is enhanced by individual education plans that are carefully drawn up by class teachers and the co-ordinator. The assessments, plans and records kept by all those who work with pupils with special educational needs, including support assistants, are of good quality. The process of transferring targets from individual education plans into pupils' exercise books is good and helps pupils keep in mind their targets, which go beyond the immediate lesson. The impact of this teaching is evident in the significant number of pupils who have been removed from the special needs register.
23. There were no significant weaknesses in the lessons observed and the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Issues about teaching raised by the last inspection report have been tackled well. Teachers now plan a range of experiences within lessons to support creative expression. For example, in science, pupils plan investigations which are linked to their daily lives, reading is promoted widely across subjects using a good range of fiction and non-fiction texts and in subjects such as ICT and design and technology pupils' learning enables them to see the relevance of planning, designing, making and recording the outcomes of their learning.

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

24. The curriculum is broad and covers the subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, a very good programme for personal, social and health education and a very wide selection of activities which are built into the everyday learning of pupils in all classes. The teaching staff have adapted curriculum plans to provide a very good range of learning experiences. The very practical nature of the curriculum, in all classes, ensures that pupils understand that their learning is closely relevant to their everyday lives. The examples teachers use are about children's everyday experiences and the

school uses their immediate environment very well to develop in pupils an interest in local history and geography.

25. Teachers plan pupils' learning experiences very thoroughly and tasks are planned to ensure that as they move from year to year, their learning builds well on their previous experiences. Policies and schemes of work are of very good quality. They set out clearly, in each subject, the knowledge, skills and important ideas that teachers should include in their planning at particular times of the school year. These are based on national guidelines but have been adapted well to meet the needs of pupils. The curriculum provided for pupils with special educational needs is good. The special educational needs co-ordinator and teachers design individual education plans of good quality. They inform pupils and parents about the work that should be covered at home and school, and the targets that have to be reached.
26. The range of extra-curricular activities is very good. The school provides a very wide range of sporting activities including all of the usual team games. Music, gardening and chess clubs all figure in the school's provision after lessons. This very high level of provision adds to parents' well-founded opinion that their school cares for the whole child. This is seen in the personal, social and health education programme. Teachers have taken great care to include aspects of personal development that are crucial to pupils' healthy growth. Issues of safe and healthy lifestyles as well as aspects of social and moral growth, living as a full member of the community and how society works are all included in the school's curriculum plans. More importantly, all of the staff, under the careful and considered leadership of the headteacher, abide by these plans and ensure that pupils are well informed about their rights and responsibilities.
27. Pupils with special educational needs receive the curriculum offered by the school and are provided with good support through the deployment of additional staff. Teaching and support staff successfully fulfil the requirements of the Code of Practice. A key element in this success is the good quality of support in the classroom and the organisation of pupils in Years 1 and 2, which helps to provide a consistent level of support for pupils with special educational needs. The school has developed good strategies for teaching literacy and very good strategies for teaching numeracy. Both aspects are used well in other subjects, thus increasing the opportunities pupils have to practise their skills. Pupils develop good numeracy skills; they are quick to use their understanding of number when working with grids and maps in geography. They draw graphs of their scientific discoveries and build sledges and carts, demonstrating well developed measuring skills. Equally, pupils use their writing skills well in subjects such as history and religious education. When pupils write accounts they are lucid and informative. Their reading skills are also used well to research information using books, CD-ROMs and the Internet.
28. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given a very high priority and is a particular strength of the school. It contributes significantly to the ethos of the school and the pupils' standards of attainment. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Regular opportunities are given for pupils to hear about and reflect upon spiritual and moral values through assemblies, the classroom and the daily life of the school. The high quality assemblies provide pupils with an opportunity to reflect on their values and beliefs. This was evidenced in the story of 'The Brahmin and the Tiger', which reinforced the importance of keeping promises, in the dramatic production of the story of Rama and Sita and the story of Abraham and Isaac. The gasps of wonder expressed by pupils when shown a page of the Hebrew Torah was evidence of their enjoyment and interest in this very positive experience. Religious education lessons contribute to the development of the pupils' spiritual awareness and their understanding of spiritual and moral issues. Pupils respect the beliefs of others and empathise with the prejudice and persecution that some have to endure. This was a feature of an excellent lesson about the life and times of Anne Frank. Pupils are encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings and teachers and other pupils value their contributions.
29. The school has excellent provision for pupils' moral development and promotes high standards. Pupils successfully develop a good understanding of the difference between



right and wrong because adults provide good role models and show care and concern for the well being of others. Very good relationships are fostered throughout the school. Moral issues are well promoted in assemblies and highlight the importance of being responsible for one's own actions, living alongside and caring for others. For example, pupils were sensitively encouraged to reflect on their attitudes to animals and to compare them with those of the Buddhist faith. Very good opportunities are provided in classroom discussions for pupils to develop strong moral values.

30. The provision for social development is excellent. Pupils are provided with plenty of opportunities to work collaboratively in the classroom and within the community. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 visit local places of interest and older pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit from residential visits further afield in Dovedale and Wales. Social skills are encouraged and reinforced at every opportunity. Consequently, pupils treat one another with kindness and respect and show kindness and sympathy for those who need encouragement. Teachers encourage pupils to listen to one another with attention and respect when exchanging ideas in class activities. For example, infant pupils are encouraged to share ideas with their talking partners and junior pupils have very good opportunities to make decisions and share responsibility for their own learning. All staff provide positive role models and reinforce expectations of standards of social behaviour and the management of conflict. The quality of relationships is therefore excellent.
31. Opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility for duties that contribute to the life of the school, for example, preparing the hall for assemblies, operating projectors and music centres, working with younger pupils and taking registers and moneyboxes to the school office. Pupils are also encouraged to raise funds for charities such as the Blue Peter Appeal.
32. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. They are given a wide range of opportunities to appreciate cultural and aesthetic values in art, literature and music. Art makes a significant contribution to pupils' development through the study of a very wide and exciting range of artists, including Clarice Cliff, Paul Klee and Pablo Picasso. These are developed further in the practical activities they experience and through visits to art galleries. Visitors to school such as specialists in Roman and Tudor history, artists and theatre groups make a valuable contribution to the provision for cultural development. Work in religious education promotes an understanding of world faiths. The high quality displays in classrooms and public areas reflect the impact of provision on pupils' learning across the curriculum. These opportunities enable pupils to appreciate the cultural traditions and features of Europe and the world beyond.
33. The weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been addressed fully. There is now appropriate coverage of the elements of design and technology and the range of reading experiences planned across subjects has improved significantly and is now good.

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

34. The school takes excellent care of its pupils. The happy, warm atmosphere provides them with a very secure and stimulating environment in which to learn and develop as rounded young people with high aspirations and a love of learning.
35. Personal and social education is given a very high priority and is successfully promoted through lessons, assemblies, educational visits and the excellent relationships that exist in the school. The school places a very high value on caring for the pupils and as a result pupils care for each other and have a clear concept of their own value and place in the school and wider community. The headteacher plays a vital role in the support given to pupils' care and safety. Rules, regulations and relationships all hinge on the protection of pupils. The headteacher and staff personally ensure safety at the beginning and end of the school day by being in the playground or at the school gates. They welcome pupils in the morning and see them safely delivered to parents and carers at the end of the school day. Parents and pupils themselves are involved in target setting for personal and social

development. Careful attention is placed on planning residential visits for Years 2, 5 and 6 to develop their independence and social and personal skills. Staff involve outside agencies, such as the school nurse and the police, to support pupils where and when necessary. 'Crucial Crew' training provides pupils with excellent personal skills in responding to difficult and life threatening situations. As a result of the training offered, one pupil was instrumental in saving the life of a family member. Individual concerns about pupils are carefully monitored and supported. All staff, including lunchtime supervisors, are aware of local and school procedures for child protection issues. The headteacher is the designated child protection person and he ensures all staff receives relevant in-service training in line with locally agreed guidelines.

36. The headteacher and governors make regular inspections of the school buildings and grounds in line with the school's policies on health and safety. Accidents to pupils are recorded appropriately and monitored to identify trends and highlight any apparent weaknesses in the health and safety of pupils. Arrangements for supervision at lunchtimes and play times are excellent. Pupils are very well supervised by ancillary and teaching staff. Individual strengths are celebrated and staff work very hard to eliminate weaknesses and insecurities through careful developed systems of support and encouragement which value all involved in the life of the school.
37. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are outstanding and have improved significantly since the last inspection. The school has established very carefully planned programmes for assessing and monitoring the attainment of pupils. From the nursery through to Year 6, school assessments, statutory and non-statutory tests are used very effectively to provide very useful information about pupils' attainment and progress. The results are comprehensively analysed and used effectively to identify areas of development for the school, to highlight individual learning needs and to inform lesson planning. The school is successfully tracking pupils' progress over the school year and across the key stages, enabling them to identify where pupils have made gains in their knowledge and understanding and where additional support is needed. The procedures ensure that all staff make consistent and effective judgements about the quality of pupils' work.
38. Pupils and parents are actively involved in target setting. Pupils regularly evaluate their own progress both informally in lessons and formally through self-evaluation records. The identification of termly targets and areas of development, together with the acknowledgement of other personal achievements, makes a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development and good progress.
39. All the special needs staff liaise well with outside agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are fully met. The school has good and effective procedures to identify and meet the needs of its pupils with special educational needs following the guidance of the Code of Practice.
40. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are of a very high order. The school has an extremely positive and successful approach to behaviour management and this enhances the quality of learning and pupils' achievements. There are very clear strategies, sanctions and rewards which staff, pupils and parents are aware of. School rules are displayed prominently in classrooms and around the school and give pupils a very clear understanding of what is expected of them. Parents are involved at a very early stage whenever an individual's behaviour is giving cause for concern. The headteacher and his staff have a strong belief in each pupil's potential for excellence and this is obvious in the high standards of behaviour evident throughout the school.
41. Attendance levels, although slightly below the national average, have shown a steady increase over the past four years. The level of unauthorised absence has decreased dramatically over this period and is now about average. The main factors contributing to the level of absence are the number of pupils who take holidays in term time and the number of pupils who remain on the register after appearing to have left the school or

during known long absences, for example, due to serious illness. The very caring attitude of the school places the needs and security of pupils as the first priority; they are considered before taking action that would only improve statistics. Regular attendance and punctuality are very strongly encouraged and are seen as crucial in raising standards. Very few pupils are late and lessons start on time. Arrangements for monitoring attendance are very rigorous. The headteacher monitors lateness and absences. Home visits and personal contact are features of the school's caring attitudes and are used before involving the more formal procedures of the local authority. These measures have been very successful in raising the level of attendance since the last inspection. In all his dealings and procedures the headteacher always puts the needs of the pupils first.

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

42. The school has established very good links with parents and the effectiveness of the partnership is having a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes and achievements. The provision mentioned in the last report has been maintained and developed to a high standard.
43. According to the comments made at the pre-inspection meeting and in the inspection questionnaire, parents are extremely supportive of the school. They are particularly pleased with the encouragement the school gives their children to work hard and achieve their best; the excellent leadership provided by the headteacher and the very good way in which problems and suggestions are treated. Their children love school and are very well behaved. A very small proportion of parents tended to disapprove of the level of homework provided and wanted more information about their children's progress. Inspection evidence supports the very positive responses made by parents. The homework pupils receive is imaginative, practical and well supported by school resources. Parents are well informed about the levels provided and how to help their children at home. It is appropriate for the age range and enhances their learning well. Information provided to parents about their children's progress is excellent.
44. The overall system to keep parents informed about their children's progress and to keep them involved in their children's education is excellent. The use of target sheets, which are agreed by parents and teachers in the spring term, is a particularly effective feature. Annual reports produced at the end of the summer term consistently give parents a true, honest and detailed reflection of their children's achievements during the year and refer specifically to progress made against targets set. The addition of termly consultation evenings and the daily availability of class teachers and the headteacher ensure that parents are fully informed about their children. Very good information is provided in regular newsletters both about the general life of the school but in particular about areas to be studied by the pupils. Sessions are held regularly to inform parents about school or national developments, for example, the teaching of numeracy. Good parental liaison helps ensure that the youngest children settle quickly into the nursery class. The school makes every effort to ensure that parents have the opportunity to take part in the identification and provision for the special educational needs of their children, though some parents choose not to take up these opportunities. There are very good systems to inform parents of their children's progress within the special educational needs provision of the school.
45. Parents contribute well to their children's learning at school and at home. They give good support to pupils' homework. For example, in design and technology, Year 5 pupils brought into school a range of bridges constructed at home. Home reading is supported well and regular comments are made in the home/school reading records by parents and teachers. Parents are well involved about behavioural issues and the support given to the school's behavioural policy contributes towards its success. The school makes good efforts to encourage parental help in the school and although the response is limited it is valued and used well. The Friends of the School give good help in fundraising and arranging social functions.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The headteacher provides strong effective leadership of the highest quality. His dedication to providing pupils with a broad and balanced education and his pleasure in raising expectations of achievement underpin the school's aims. Very strong pastoral leadership and commitment to the local community over many years have enabled him to command outstanding levels of trust and respect. The headteacher and senior staff provide very good role models, projecting the values the school promotes, and there is a strong team spirit to ensure all pupils achieve their best. The aims of the school are clearly understood by staff, governors, parents and pupils. Consequently, they are achieved in full. The headteacher and deputy head work in close partnership and involve staff fully in decision-making. All staff feel that they are part of a management team and roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. The strong ethos for learning within this positive atmosphere makes school a happy learning environment for staff and pupils. Staff contribute their ideas to move the school forward and rigorous debate is welcomed. This ensures that policies are implemented consistently in all classes and pupils benefit from consistent approaches to discipline and learning. The rigorous monitoring of standards and tracking of pupils' progress is an example of this very good practice.
47. Monitoring standards is a strength of the provision. Since the last report, when it was a key issue, significant strides have been taken in evaluating strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. Senior staff and co-ordinators have time allocated to enable them to observe teachers, review planning and regularly look at samples of pupils' work. Governors play an important role in this process. They all have a subject responsibility and, in discussion with co-ordinators, spend time in school and write evaluative reports of their visits. These reports are of good quality and are shared at governors' meetings. This practice is well established and governors have a good knowledge of standards, the strengths of the school and aspects that could be developed further. They offer a high level of commitment and good support, for example, to the teaching of literacy in Year 6 by hearing pupils read and attending weekly class assemblies. They feel valued and are invited to take part in a wide range of school initiatives. Regular discussions with teachers and attendance at local training sessions enable them to keep well informed. They write the annual report for parents and support the regular review of the school prospectus.
48. The governing body has set in place excellent procedures for monitoring the school's provision for special educational needs to enable them to act as a critical friend. They have a named governor who takes an active interest in the delivery of that provision and in the progress of the pupils. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides very good leadership and in particular the tracking of pupils' progress from year to year. This means that governors receive up-to-date information about the success of the school's provision and how those successes can be viewed in light of the decisions taken about special educational needs staffing and resources.
49. The school applies the principles of best value well. For example, governors closely monitor the school's performance and compare it with that of similar local primary schools; they review initiatives such as the use of booster classes and the current arrangement for a mixed age class in Years 1 and 2. Good economy is sought, for example in the very effective and efficient use of the caretaker in dealing with day-to-day maintenance jobs. Teachers' specialisms, such as music, are used well throughout the school. A range of quotes is sought before agreeing to aspects of building maintenance; governors ask questions about budget expenditure and support rigorous procedures for the appointment of staff. They are confident in the leadership of the headteacher and senior staff and are guided by them to make decisions which impact on the delivery of the curriculum, for example, the implementation of national initiatives such as the literacy and numeracy strategies. Funds are well applied to support staff training and this ensures that all staff and governors have opportunities to develop professionally and lead staff training themselves.

50. Financial planning is secure. The governors and headteacher measure future commitments and levels of income well and are planning appropriately for the projected increase in the number of pupils. The budget for the current year has been prudently framed to retrieve the small deficit from the last financial year. A minor weakness in monitoring expenditure led to this deficit but a very recent audit report states that controls are now adequate. The school seeks appropriately to spend resources available on the educational needs of the pupils and uses surpluses from the 'care facility' well to enhance allocations; the governors and headteacher are well aware of the reliance on this source of income to meet basic needs for resources. Day-to-day administration is good and good systems control school-based funds such as the 'care facility'. The headteacher has successfully raised funds to supplement the schools base budget and enhance the provision for pupils, for example, by acquiring a minibus and garage.
51. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are used well to support their progress. The school is well maintained by the caretaker. New classrooms enhance provision for the infants but junior classrooms are cramped. Plans to build two further classrooms are expected to go ahead in the near future to improve space available for the juniors. At present, there is no space for a computer suite and the library and office are barely adequate. The library is situated near to the hall, away from classes and is not used sufficiently well. In addition there are too few books to support research and this inhibits independent learning. The school office is too small to support the daily use of the computer and enable routine tasks to be undertaken in reasonable comfort.
52. Minor aspects of the school prospectus that did not meet statutory requirements at the time of the last report have been addressed and requirements are now met in full.

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

- (1) Raise standards of speaking higher by;
- planning opportunities for pupils to present their ideas across the curriculum;
  - providing time for pupils to plan and prepare their presentations;
  - ensuring teachers consistently model the use of Standard English accurately; and
  - expecting pupils to use Standard English in formal situations.

(Paragraphs 4-5, 20-1, 53, 66, 70, 84, 95,122)

- (2) \*Raise standards in writing higher by:
- building on the very good teaching in the juniors to provide frameworks for writing which encourage the development of self expression;
  - encouraging the use of Standard English; and
  - improving the quality of handwriting in the drafting process.

(Paragraphs 3-5, 20, 64-70)

- (3) \*Improve the range of books for independent research and equipment to support the teaching of information and communication technology.

(Paragraphs 51, 71, 112-13)

\* signifies an issue already identified by the school and included in its development plan

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
20%	32%	37%	12%	0%	0%	0%

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	28	257
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	41

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	3	71

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### *Attendance*

<b>Authorised absence</b>	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	5.4

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	%
School data	1.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	14	24	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	13
	Girls	20	20	21
	Total	30	30	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 ( 76 )	79 ( 70 )	89 ( 77 )
	National	82 ( 80 )	83 ( 81 )	87 ( 84 )

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	11
	Girls	20	19	19
	Total	30	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	79 ( 70 )	79 ( 73 )	79 ( 84 )
	National	82 ( 80 )	86 ( 85 )	87 ( 86 )

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

### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2*

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	14	19	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	9	12
	Girls	15	15	18
	Total	25	24	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 ( 75 )	73 ( 72 )	91 ( 81 )
	National	70 ( 65 )	69 ( 59 )	78 ( 69 )

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	9	10
	Girls	14	13	17
	Total	24	22	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 ( 50 )	67 ( 58 )	82 ( 59 )
	National	68 ( 65 )	69 ( 65 )	75 ( 71 )

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	12
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	10
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	263
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	4	
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		
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– Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	32

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

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	37

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	12

Number of pupils per FTE adult	14
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	447577
Total expenditure	468506
Expenditure per pupil	1746
Balance brought forward from previous year	13,685
Balance carried forward to next year	7244



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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	285
Number of questionnaires returned	154

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	30	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	39	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	36	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	42	8	3	6
The teaching is good.	67	32	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	42	7	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	30	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	24	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	46	47	5	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	71	27	1	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	36	1	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	60	31	4	1	5

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

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

53. The school's provision for children in the nursery and reception classes has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now very good. The curriculum is based on the 'Six Areas of Learning'. The school provides a wide range of challenging and focused experiences to promote learning in all areas. The overall attainment levels of most children entering the nursery are well below those usually expected. A significant number of children have very poorly developed speaking skills, confirmed by baseline assessment. This affects children's ability to communicate their depth of learning, especially in mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world. Teaching in the nursery and reception is of a very high standard and this has a very positive effect on children's learning. As a result, most children achieve well and by the end of the reception year, are in line to reach the early learning goals in all six areas of learning except in communication skills.
54. Teaching in the foundation stage is very good. All staff have a secure understanding of how young children learn and of the importance of play and first hand experiences. This has a very positive effect on the good progress children make towards the early learning goals and provides a very firm foundation for learning in the infants. Lesson plans are very clear and detailed with appropriate learning objectives linked to experiences that are interesting, challenging and focused very closely on what children need to learn. Activities are well organised and promote communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. There is a very good balance of teacher directed activities and child initiated ones. Staff provide very effective support for all activities, interacting to check and extend children's understanding. Staff are very aware of the weaknesses in a significant number of children's communication skills. However, they do not consistently identify and build on those structures which children need to develop further their thinking skills. This is a minor weakness. Praise and encouragement are very effective in promoting positive behaviour and personal, social and emotional development. Children are given very clear instructions about what it is they are expected to do. Staff use questions, comments and observations very well to assess children's progress and to plan for future learning.
55. Baseline assessment results are shared with parents and are used very effectively to help teachers plan tasks to meet individual needs. Records are informative and provide useful information that indicates children's progress towards the early learning goals. Assessment strategies predict likely attainment at the end of Year 2 and identify the support children are likely to need to achieve their best. Staff work very well together and this has a positive effect on the quality of the learning. Teachers and classroom support assistants are enthusiastic and have high expectations of the children. Parents are actively involved in their children's learning through sharing story books and early reading scheme books at home or whenever they can, working alongside their children in the nursery or reception class.

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

56. In both year groups communication, language and literacy are given a very high priority. The nursery and reception classes provide a wide range of effective experiences and activities to develop and extend children's language and literacy skills. In the nursery, emphasis is placed on listening carefully to the adults and following instructions. By the time children move into the reception class they have become attentive listeners. They enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and join in familiar ones with enthusiasm. In both nursery and the reception classes children are encouraged to share conversations with adults and are given very good role models to develop their spoken language. Challenging questions and comments are used to promote children's thinking.

However, language for thinking and communicating is very restricted and this inhibits progress.

57. Many children have difficulty responding to open-ended questions preferring to use one-word answers, point or nod their heads or simply to demonstrate practically what they know. Many children need a great deal of exposure to the experiences provided before they are able to express themselves with any degree of confidence. For example, in the nursery, staff introduce new vocabulary and ideas to children while involving them in tasting a range of interesting foods. However, children had limited knowledge of the names of some foods, such as fruits, and were unable to articulate their favourites without significant support. Structured play situations, snack times and 'together times' provide opportunities for children to talk about their own experiences and extend their vocabulary. Very clearly labelled displays, alphabet and sound friezes and individual name cards help children to develop early reading and writing skills. Children are encouraged to make marks on paper as they create their own shopping and invitation lists and record appointments for staff to have their hair done. By the time they enter reception many are drawing recognisable pictures and attempting to write their own simple sentences using familiar letters, sounds and words. Children are learning to recognise their names and older children are able to write their names with increasing accuracy using capital and small letters. Comfortable and inviting book corners promote a love of books and children are learning to handle books with care. Higher attaining reception children recognise initial sounds and use these to read unfamiliar words. Children choose books as an activity and all children take books home on a regular basis to share with family members. This has a very positive effect on children's progress in learning to read. Appropriate elements of the literacy strategy are implemented for older children in the reception class and this has a positive effect on children's achievements.

### **Mathematical Development**

58. The nursery and reception classes provide a wide range of activities to promote mathematical understanding. Children enjoy mathematics and learn to use mathematical ideas and skills in real situations, such as when they weigh out the ingredients to make bread, make imaginary telephone calls to their mums or decide the time of a hairdresser's appointment. In both classes children have opportunities to compare, match, sort, order, sequence and count using a range of games, routines and experiences. Through well-planned topic work they explore number, pattern, shape and measurement. Older reception children join in with the teacher and count to 30. Number lines are used effectively to develop an understanding of order and position. Teachers place great emphasis on developing appropriate mathematical language. Children consider size, shape and position when playing with different sized toys or emptying and filling containers in water and sand play. Children are encouraged to solve simple problems as they work out how many can play in the different activities. Staff use number rhymes such as 'five little ducks' to develop children's early ideas of addition and subtraction. However, many children need considerable support to express their knowledge and understanding and explain to adults what they are doing. Appropriate elements of the numeracy strategy are implemented for older children in the reception class and this has a positive effect on children's achievements.

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

59. Children are developing a good understanding of the world around them. The natural curiosity of young children is enhanced as staff continually encourage them to talk about their discoveries and experiences, to ask questions and to explore man-made and natural materials using magnifying glasses and bug boxes. Children observe worms closely while staff encourage them to look closely at their movements, colour and characteristics. Careful questions expand children's thinking as they are asked 'Where is their head?' or 'Why do you think that?' Consideration for living creatures is encouraged as children carefully return worms to the school garden. Children in reception class observe the changes that occur as they bake bread. The celebration of

festivals such as christenings, weddings and births encourages children to develop an understanding of their own community and culture. They learn about the passage of time through celebrating birthdays, talking about the days of the week and the changing seasons and weather. Through role-play children learn about other cultures and different ways of life. For example, a 'Chinese take away' supports their understanding of different foods, languages, cultures and ways of life. Staff carefully observe and assess children's skills providing them with support and encouragement to help them improve their skills of cutting, folding and sticking. The computer and tape recorders are popular choices and many children are confident and competent in using the 'mouse' and different programs to support their learning in mathematics and language and literacy. Construction toys are used well to encourage children to design and make their own models and to discover how things work.

### **Physical Development**

60. Very good provision is made for children's physical development. Children's natural exuberance and energy is catered for well. However, although they are reminded of the importance of healthy eating there are missed opportunities to remind children of the importance of exercise to develop healthy minds and bodies. A very good range of challenging large equipment is available on a daily basis to help children develop their climbing and balancing skills. Confidence and skill are exhibited as children balance, climb and swing on the equipment. There is a wide range of wheeled toys which children manoeuvre well avoiding obstacles as they incorporate them into their play situations. In the nursery and reception class children have structured physical education lessons to promote further their development. In these lessons children are developing good spatial awareness, control and imagination as they respond to music and ideas. They are learning to run, hop, skip, jump and balance with increasing co-ordination and confidence. Children who are less confident are given very sensitive support to encourage them to take part in lessons and improve their skills. Children move around the school safely and are able to line up in order to go to different parts of the school. Emphasis is placed on developing children's skills when handling tools, construction toys and malleable materials and they are becoming competent and skilled as they handle a variety of tools and materials safely and with care.

### **Creative Development**

61. Children enjoy a very good range of experiences in art, music, story and imaginative play. Through these experiences children are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary and to develop their use of language to express ideas. A very good range of musical instruments, songs and rhymes helps to develop their understanding of sound and rhythm and pattern. Children enjoy taking part in the many very good role-play situations provided, such as the 'hairdressers', 'home corner' and 'shop'. The shops provide children with a range of opportunities to use their imagination as they take on the roles of customers and shop assistants and use a range of interesting and stimulating resources. There are many activities available for children to develop their senses through investigating texture, shape and colour. Baking is available on a regular basis and children explore different tastes and smells of foods. Staff provide a range of materials with interesting textures from which children can choose to create their own designs, pictures, models and collages. They work with play dough, wood and re-cycled materials to create two and three-dimensional pictures and models. Sand and water play provide additional learning opportunities.

### **Social and personal development**

62. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given a very high priority. Children enjoy coming to school and respond well to the rules and routines of nursery and school life. They are eager to learn new skills and to explore new ideas. Emphasis is placed on developing understanding of appropriate behaviour and the difference between right and wrong. Staff explain sensitively to children the consequences of their actions, encouraging them to consider the feelings of others and to apologise if they

have upset someone. Children are learning to share and work together in a variety of situations, such as computer games, role-play and outdoor play. Older children work independently for sustained periods of time and take pride in their achievements. They work hard at difficult tasks such as completing complex jigsaws or exploring whether materials are magnetic. Relationships are very positive and children are encouraged to reflect on their feelings, actions and experiences. There are well-planned opportunities for children to develop a sensitivity and awareness of other people, their different religions, cultures and ways of life.

## ENGLISH

63. In the 1999 tests for eleven-year-olds pupils' attainment was average in English. When compared to similar schools performance was below average. The most recent test results for this age group show a significant increase in the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels in English because the proportion of more able pupils in the cohort tested was higher than usual. Achievements over the last four years show a trend of gradual improvement that is similar to the national trend.
64. Many children start school with very limited language. The very good teaching they receive enables them to make good progress and by the time they are six most children enjoy stories and rhymes. However, many still prefer to express themselves through paint, music and physical activities. Children listen attentively for short periods and recite rhymes with encouragement but many do not achieve the expectations of the national early learning goals, particularly in communication skills. This inhibits their ability to express their knowledge and understanding across the curriculum.
65. Though infants make sound progress in relation to their prior attainment seven-year-olds do not manage to attain the expected level in writing. Limited language inhibits achievement in independent writing and this is why no pupils attained the higher level 3 in the end of Key Stage 1 tests. In reading pupils attain the expected standard and a third achieved the higher level 3. Compared to pupils in similar schools they were below average in reading and well below average in writing. The most recent results in reading are similar to 1999. There is a slight improvement in writing with a higher proportion of pupils attaining level 2 but still no higher scores in writing.
66. Inspection evidence confirms that standards in speaking and writing remain below average by the age of seven but in reading they are average. When asked searching questions, pupils show greater understanding and knowledge than their written work and test results suggest. In the juniors pupils become more confident to use a wider range of vocabulary in lessons and they make good progress. This reflects the impact of the very high quality teaching they receive. By the time they are eleven attainment is about average in all aspects of English although pupils have difficulty recognising when it is important to use Standard English, for example, in independent writing and when answering questions and presenting their ideas and learning outcomes to the class.
67. Extensive effort has supported improvements in reading since the school was last inspected. The national literacy strategy has been implemented effectively and teachers have a good level of subject expertise and apply the elements of the literacy hour to meet pupils' needs. Teaching is good in the infants and very good in the juniors. Examples of excellence were observed in the teaching of older pupils. Teachers' planning is of high quality, objectives are clearly communicated and tasks are well matched to sustain interest and promote a love of literature. In the best lessons the pace, dialogue and skilful use of interactive questioning maintains a high level of interest and a culture in which pupils learn through self-evaluation. The careful analysis of test results has identified writing as a weakness. The timetable has been adjusted to build in additional opportunities to reinforce basic skills and to provide time for independent writing.

68. By the age of seven pupils enjoy a range of stories, poems and information books. Although many rely on school resources they are enthusiastic and know the purpose of these different types of text. They make good use of phonics and pictures to decode new vocabulary. Higher attainers read fluently and expressively but those who are less skilled need support to read with expression and to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words. They are most confident when reading their own work but recognise the importance of accuracy and when reading for information make links to their work in other subjects. For example, pupils read non-fiction to extend their knowledge of artists. They used contents and index to locate information about Pablo Picasso and picked out essential information to describe the reasons why he painted in blue. Pupils find writing more difficult. When guided by teachers to construct or complete sentences they achieve levels appropriate for their ages. They understand terms such as verb and adjective and know the purpose of exclamation marks and the main features of punctuation. However, when required to write imaginatively in extended writing they have difficulty applying all the skills they have learned independently and rely on the vocabulary introduced in lessons. With adult support they write poems, letters and simple stories but achievements in unaided writing remains below average. Handwriting is legible but not consistently well formed. Pupils currently in Year 2 have not benefited from the revised practical structure of the foundation curriculum that is supporting the development of language well.
69. By the age of eleven pupils reading is fluent and they use their skills to research information. They understand how to use the library and make comparisons between the styles of different authors introduced through the literacy hour. For example, pupils in Year 6 name favourite authors such as Roald Dahl, J.K. Rowling and Ted Hughes. They describe the different features of writing they enjoy such as humour, description and excitement. Teachers' imaginative use of books stimulates interest and the desire to read for enjoyment and information. In Year 5 the teacher built well on the enthusiasm for the Harry Potter stories. Through excellent modelling of reading and access to the Internet pupils were able to hold an on-line interview with the author. This exciting initiative encouraged pupils to devise well-focused questions to learn more about the author and the origins of her ideas. In addition, the teacher used the book as a stimulus for writing. This effectively captured interest and motivation to write as an author. The success of this stimulus was evident in the response to evaluating the quality of writing samples as a class. Pupils identified grammatical errors and thought of ways in which description could be improved. They identified spelling errors but frequently these errors reflect local speech patterns that are not always grammatically correct. Handwriting is usually neat and well formed in final drafts but there is room for improvement in the consistent use of a fluent joined hand in exercise books.
70. The weaknesses in English are frequently related to speaking skills. Pupils of all ages find it hard to use Standard English in their speech and writing and require consistent adult support to apply their knowledge. Teachers usually provide good role models, speaking clearly and concisely but the quality is not consistent across all classes and subjects, especially in the infants. This is one reason why the quality of teaching is higher in the juniors. Where teaching is of a very high standard teachers repeat information in a range of ways to ensure all pupils develop understanding of new vocabulary. Very good teaching in the juniors enables eleven-year-olds to reach standards appropriate for the age range. When teachers require pupils to speak in formal situations and to answer questions in sentences they usually meet these expectations. This was evident in assemblies when pupils spoke clearly and confidently presenting the story of Rama and Sita. However, there is some inconsistency in this practice and there are occasions when time is not allocated to enable pupils to plan and prepare to speak to audiences. These are weaknesses for the school to address.
71. The curriculum co-ordinator leads and manages the development of literacy very well. She monitors teaching and learning, supports staff and ensures governors are well informed about strengths and weaknesses in the provision. She analyses test results, sets targets and tracks progress. The improvement in the subject since the last inspection has been supported by the effective introduction of the National Literacy

Strategy and the co-ordinator's high expectations of staff and pupils to succeed. A weakness in provision is the lack of space available for the library and the barely adequate range of information books to support independent research. The action taken to purchase text which is attractive to boys has had a positive influence on attitudes to reading.

## **MATHEMATICS**

72. Standards in the tests for eleven-year-olds in 1999 were average when compared to all schools and similar schools. Tests for seven-year-olds in the same year showed standards to be well below average when compared to all schools and similar schools but in this cohort there was a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. At the age of seven the proportion of pupils who attained the higher levels was well below the national average, whereas at eleven the proportion attaining the higher levels was above average. Over the past four years seven-year-old boys attained higher levels than girls of the same age. Boys and girls of eleven attained similar levels and generally standards over the past four years have kept pace with the national trends. Since the last inspection attainment generally has been maintained and the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels as eleven-year-olds has improved. Last year the school did not meet the challenging targets set in this subject. The factors effecting this performance include the year group having a very high proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register as well as a higher than average number of bright children. For example, of those pupils who performed at the national average or above, half gained the higher levels in the National Curriculum tests. However, the school's analysis of progress from the last national tests, when these pupils were seven-years-old, shows good progress.
73. Inspectors found that seven-year-olds attain average standards and eleven-year-olds attain above average standards. There are fewer pupils with special educational needs in mathematics in the current cohort. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in addressing the issue of infant pupils lacking an understanding about shape and space. This improvement in attainment is due to a consistent quality of teaching and a well-balanced and broad curriculum. In the infants, the quality of teaching is good in half the lessons and in the remainder satisfactory. Generally, teaching is of a higher quality in Year 2. Teaching is good in Year 3 and often of excellent quality in Years 4, 5 and 6. In these classes teachers have very high expectations of all pupils and plan interesting work which pupils find very enjoyable. In all classes, pupils are enthusiastic about mathematics but in the last three years of the school number work is seen as fun and, when asked, pupils name mathematics as their favourite subject. The main area for development is in the quality of explanations pupils give when talking about the methods they use. Throughout the school pupils are encouraged to explain their thinking although it often takes them a great deal of time to structure their thoughts. This is because pupils understand the important ideas in mathematics but they do not have enough time to plan how or what they will report back to their teachers and class. Additionally, there are occasions when pupils are not given enough time to finish their answers independently in order that the lesson moves ahead without loss of time.
74. By the time they are seven pupils count forward and backwards accurately. They calculate with numbers beyond 20 and understand and use mathematical symbols. Pupils measure objects using standard and non-standard units, such as hand spans, and have a good understanding about how to draw graphs after collecting information. Pupils begin to acquire the skills of investigation that are vital in applying their knowledge and skills to everyday situations. For example, in Year 1 pupils subtracted the numbers they had thrown on dice and made good progress when supported closely by an adult. In a Year 2 lesson about symbols meaning greater than and less than, the teacher used a computer to draw the lesson to an end by asking pupils to select the correct symbols using the computer mouse. This was a good conclusion to the lesson and helped reinforce this important idea.

75. By the age of eleven pupils have a good understanding of number and their mental calculations are assured and accurate. At the start of each lesson teachers take pupils through a brisk session of mental calculations. In Years 4, 5 and 6 the sessions are extremely challenging and rigorous. Pupils answer the questions their teachers pose with confidence and obvious enjoyment. Teachers ask questions in quick succession, which require pupils to add, subtract, multiply and divide. Pupils double and halve with accuracy and in the most successful lessons give their methods of calculation. In Year 3 pupils use co-ordinates to crack secret codes and then write their own for their partner to break. In Year 4 all of the pupils work without rest for their teacher. They are keen to please and the quiet yet consistently challenging atmosphere in the class helps pupils make very good progress. The constant reinforcement of important points in the lesson maintains a constant, speedy pace. In this class the teacher asks a question four or five times in different ways and all pupils come to understand the point of the question. This supports the development of language well.
76. This very high quality of teaching was also observed in Years 5 and 6. In the lower set of these year groups the class teacher quickly revisited multiples of 10, counting on in fours, fives and sixes and ensuring clear understanding of negative numbers. In this class the teacher insisted that pupils use the correct terminology, reminding them of how terms such as interrogation are applied to graphs, charts and tables. When the class was presented with timetables of bus routes the teacher asked many questions about real life situations that pupils themselves may experience as well as giving good, incidental social advice – ‘it’s always polite to be early’. The tasks set for pupils not only helped them understand how to interpret charts and tables but also to understand aspects of their own lives. The number of well-prepared and confident adult helpers in this lesson meant that pupils worked very hard indeed. In this, as in most mathematics lessons, the teacher used a computer very well to support learning. The class teacher also pointed out the relevance of chart and graph work in other subjects and generally pupils use their mathematical skills well in subjects such as geography, history, science and design and technology.
77. In all mathematics lessons, planning is very good and is adapted after the assessments that the teacher makes of pupils’ progress. In the upper set of Years 5 and 6, the familiar very fast drilling of number facts sets the scene. Pupils convert fractions to decimals, find fractions of 100 and read percentages from pie charts. In this lesson the tasks were based on real topics, information about the library and giving advice to a shopkeeper about the most popular chocolate bars. The swift pace means that pupils are very keen to answer, very confident and fully involved and very interested in their work. As pupils set off to work the teacher sets time limits for each group and this too encourages a brisk pace and keen attention to the tasks in hand. The careful use of targets means that pupils are able to assess their own learning against the aims of the lesson.
78. The curriculum co-ordinator manages, directs and monitors the subject very well. The analysis of pupils’ performance, the setting of targets and tracking progress are exemplary and substantiate the school’s profile of the 1999 National Curriculum results. The development and improvement in the subject since the last inspection have been brought about because of the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the co-ordinator’s skills and expertise as a manager and leader.

## **SCIENCE**

79. The teacher assessments for seven-year-olds in 1999 indicated that attainment was well below the national average whilst the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 3 was in line with the national average. The most recent assessments for 2000 show a significant improvement, with the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level being in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 3 was above the national average.



80. The national tests for pupils aged eleven in 1999 show that attainment was above the national average and that of similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level 5 was also above average compared with similar schools. The unconfirmed results for 2000 indicate that attainment was in line with the national average and below that achieved by similar schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level was above the national average and that of similar schools. This shows a dip in performance from the previous year. However, more pupils attained the higher level 5. The variations are due to the higher proportions of more able pupils and pupils with special educational needs in the 2000 cohort. Attainment matched the targets based on prior attainment set by the school. Trends over four years show a steady improvement and standards have improved since the last inspection.
81. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in the infants and their attainment is in line with the national age related expectations. Because teaching is linked to practical experience pupils enjoy their learning. By the time they are seven pupils link their experiences of sounds and accurately classify them, for example, into grades of loud and quiet. Teachers introduce a range of recording methods enabling pupils to use forms other than writing to reflect their understanding such as sticking pictures they have selected to describe loud and quiet in their books. By linking work on electricity to pupils' understanding of home appliances used every day Year 2 pupils name sources of electricity and differentiate between appliances that are powered by battery or mains electricity. They develop good understanding of the need for safety when using electricity because teachers reinforce rules clearly and pupils understand the consequences and dangers. They delight in constructing simple electrical circuits to light bulbs and the good relationships between staff and pupils enable these successes to be shared and celebrated. Because teachers ask searching questions of pupils they apply their knowledge of science to make predictions in their investigations, for example, when sorting and testing a variety of materials for conductivity.
82. The good progress made by all pupils continues in the juniors and consequently attainment by the age of eleven is above average. Teachers make good links to subjects such as history and design technology and this enables pupils to apply their learning in a range of situations and recognise the important links science has to daily life. For example, pupils in Year 3 understand the functions of different types of teeth, name correctly the different parts of a tooth and make predictions about the outcomes for teeth linked to diet. They are taught to take proper care of their teeth and enjoyed an experiment to show differences in the amount of plaque on teeth before and after cleaning them. Similarly pupils in Year 4 achieve well in their work on reflection because the teacher ensures examples of reflective and non-reflective materials used in daily life are used for classification, for example, at the hairdressers and at the fairground. Good links are made to mathematics and pupils describe angles of reflection and justify their choices and conclusions logically. A very good lesson on forces linked mathematics, history and design and technology studies with science. This enabled Year 5 pupils to achieve especially well in their work. They recorded their predictions and observations with care and measured and recorded the force required to move a brick over a variety of surfaces accurately. Through their investigations and the constructive questioning posed by the teacher pupils developed good understanding that friction slows movement and that different surfaces have different effects on movement. They also understand and give examples of the need for slip and non-slip surfaces. Much of the work in Year 6 shows attainment to be at an above average level and discussions with pupils confirmed their knowledge and understanding. In an excellent lesson the teacher reviewed prior learning and presented pupils with five materials mixed together; their task was to separate them using their knowledge of separating materials. The lesson had a good balance of direct teaching and group work enabling pupils to discuss and collaborate together to decide on a plan to separate the materials that would achieve a successful result. They used magnetism, floating, sieving, filtering and evaporation to separate staples, polystyrene, stones, sand and salt successfully. The pupils applied their knowledge and skills well and the teacher's very high expectations of what could

be achieved enabled them to extend their learning by monitoring their activities and changing their original plans to meet the challenges of the task in full.

83. Pupils' attitudes to science are very good. They work hard and safely and respond positively to the challenges set by their teachers. The experiments in lessons in Years 5 and 6 were very successful because pupils shared their ideas and worked well together. The pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour contributes significantly to the very good learning that takes place in the lessons.
84. The teaching ranges from good to excellent and is very good overall. Lessons are very well planned and have clear learning objectives. In the best lessons the teachers' subject knowledge is good, expectations are high and questioning is both skilful and challenging. In Year 4 the teacher's questioning challenged the pupils' understanding of reflection and enabled them to clarify their thoughts and ideas. In Year 5 the teacher was able to extend pupils' learning by the use of leading questions that improved the quality of learning. The use of talking partners in a Year 2 lesson enabled all pupils to discuss their ideas on conductivity. The management of pupils is very good and, as a result, relationships are of an equally high quality. Teachers use the appropriate scientific terminology and, in junior classes, provide good modelling of suitable whole sentence responses. Pupils need reinforcement of the appropriate language and the opportunity to prepare their responses before presenting their ideas in a formal situation. The pace of lessons is brisk and purposeful especially in the whole class introductions to lessons. Pupils' work is regularly marked but is inconsistent in its quality. The best of practice not only praises the pupils but also offers advice on how they may improve their work.
85. The subject co-ordinator provides strong leadership for the subject through good subject expertise and a good overview of the school's work. A scheme of work guides the teachers' planning and there are very good systems for monitoring and evaluating the subject. There has been a significant improvement in the provision for experimentation and pupils now have the opportunity to devise their own experiments and select the equipment required. This has supported well the improvements evident since the last inspection.
86. Resources in science are appropriate and adequate for the delivery of the curriculum. Pupils' experiences are enhanced by regular exchange visits with the nearby secondary school. The curriculum is enhanced by the use of the school grounds, including the pond.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

87. Standards in art are above those usually expected of seven and eleven-year-olds. Pupils enjoy art lessons and value the exciting opportunities provided to express themselves through a range of media including paint, chalks, fabrics and modelling materials. By the age of seven pupils mix shades of colour and make detailed observational drawings and paintings, for example portrait drawings and detailed pictures in the style of Picasso. In all classes pupils have a good level of awareness of the work of famous artists they have studied, for example Lowry and Paul Klee. They create pictures that very accurately reflect these styles through discussions of colour, texture, emotions and composition. Pupils are encouraged to consider the lives of famous artists. Pupils in Year 2 know that Picasso painted pictures using blue paint because he was poor and sad. They have a very keen awareness of how experiences create emotions that can be expressed through art. Eleven-year-olds show understanding of the lives of people from other cultures and create patterns using fabric and thread which link to their studies of different world religions. Art makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
88. Pupils in Year 1 describe their experiences through paint and their pictures show detail and an awareness of important events in their lives. They welcome opportunities to

express themselves through art. Good links are made to literacy, for example when each picture is given a title representing the composition, for example, 'at the caravan'. In another lesson the teacher used the story, 'The Giant Jam Sandwich', to inspire pictures of giants. This captured pupils' imaginations and they created interesting pictures of giants using chalks, paints and fabrics.

89. Pupils in Year 6 explain how they have painted on plates and mugs in the style of Clarice Cliff; in Year 4 dream sequences form the theme for printing on pillowcases based on their study of Salvador Dali. Pupils are proud of their work, particularly displays in classrooms, the hall and school entrance, which illustrate work in subjects such as English, history, geography and religious education. These bright, attractive displays enhance the school environment and place value on individual effort. Teachers are enthusiastic and the quality of teaching is good. In one lesson in Year 4 teaching was excellent. The teacher engaged a large class in printing pillowcases using print blocks made in the previous lesson. Pupils were so enthusiastic to complete their project that every second was used effectively. They shared resources, made decisions about how to sequence their prints as a group and completed their patterns in the allocated time. They then presented the patterns to the class, describing the dream sequence using the prints as illustrations. This provided a very good opportunity to encourage presentation skills and very good links were made to literacy. Planning is thorough and displays and photographs indicate the range of practical opportunities, which make the curriculum exciting and fun. Consequently many pupils describe art as their favourite subject and wish they had more art lessons. The junior classes are cramped but excellent organisation and management means that objectives are achieved and pupils are challenged. They concentrate well to meet the expectations made of them and attitudes are excellent. They use tools and equipment sensibly, work co-operatively and independently clear away, ensuring the space is clean and tidy for the following lesson.
90. Teachers make good use of evaluative questioning to encourage pupils to reflect on the success of their work and decide how it could be improved.
91. The policy and scheme of work are being revised in the light of requirements of Curriculum 2000. The co-ordinator has recently taken over responsibility for this area and, while systems for monitoring and evaluating standards exist, she has not yet had time to observe teaching and learning. However, she monitors displays and supports staff planning to ensure progression in the teaching of skills and techniques across the age range. Work samples and photographic evidence provides a good record of subject coverage. The school has made very good progress in addressing the issue raised in the last inspection to provide more opportunities for creativity and standards in art have improved.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

92. Standards are average at the ages of seven and eleven and pupils in all year groups understand the 'design, make and evaluate' processes involved in design and technology. In the last inspection eleven-year-olds did not attain the standards they should. Attainment has improved and, although no Year 6 lessons were observed, discussions with pupils showed that they understood:
- how to sketch, then plan and label their projects;
  - how to use a variety of tools correctly; and
  - how they would adapt drawings or change materials if they did not
  - suit the purpose of the projects.
- This is an improvement since the last inspection when there was a lack of opportunity for pupils to use a wide enough range of materials and tools. They now work independently and in groups to design and make models and projects from a range of materials. They use their mathematical skills to measure accurately and describe how to use craft knives, a variety of glues and saws when cutting timber. Pupils enjoy the subject.

93. Four lessons were observed which contained elements of design and technology, one in the infants and three in the juniors. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in all of the lessons observed, good in Year 3 and very good in Year 6. In the infants pupils tasted and expressed clear likes and dislikes for a plate of mixed fruit. This lesson had been planned after the teacher assessed pupils' knowledge of fruit and found that few of them could identify even common examples. This good strategy led to the teacher preparing an interesting range of fruit and asking pupils to plan and prepare their own salads. The important aspect of this lesson was the language work and the adults' use of words such as sweet, squashy, hard and firm. These words helped pupils to develop a vocabulary to enable them to describe their fruit salads. Pupils' recording skills in this low ability set were below average although all pupils used pencil and crayons to draw their fruit salad. In Year 3 pupils had been examining packaging and had produced boxes. In this lesson they looked carefully at crisps packets and how manufacturers named their products and gave details of contents. The layout of each packet was described and pupils used their skills and the knowledge gained in other lessons to design their own crisp packaging. Pupils worked on paper and computers to select the style, colour and size and letters. This was a good exercise, as pupils were required to work in pairs and discuss the elements of their packaging. The teacher then asked questions of good quality to enable pupils to identify the important aspects of commercial packaging.
94. Very good quality planning and teaching in Year 5 helps pupils produce above average work. The drawings they have produced of bridges are well proportioned, neat and labelled. The lesson was well structured and pupils tested the bridge supports they had designed. Encouraged by very good questioning, pupils accurately predicted how their supports would react when loaded with weights. Their behaviour was excellent as their bridges were tested to the point of collapse and, when called to observe a particular test, pupils gathered so that the tallest pupils stood at the back. They did this without instructions from the teacher. During the analysis at the end of the lesson the teacher drew links to pupils' work in science. This enabled pupils to develop a good understanding of the testing process and how it is applied to structures. The focus on practical work and high expectations of pupils' designing capability led to a clear understanding of the importance of the design process and how features of designs can be altered to improve the finished product.
95. In Year 6, elements of the design process were used very well as pupils studied the work of Clarice Cliff. High quality products were produced involving painting plates and mugs, transparent plastic, stencils on cotton and felt collages. The quality of this work was above average and some examples of the ceramic work were of very high quality, showing a very good understanding of the elements of Cliff's work and a very good eye for proportion and colour. However, during discussion with pupils their ability to articulate their achievements was average overall. Pupils have a thorough understanding of the design, make and evaluate process. They use a range of materials to produce their work and know how to use tools.
96. The curriculum is being improved continually and the co-ordinator for the subject has worked well with the co-ordinator for science to plan joint control and monitoring activities. The subject is well placed to make significant improvements over the next school year and the development plan drawn up by the co-ordinator is of very good quality.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

97. Only two lessons were observed in geography. Judgements on standards have been made from the lesson observations, analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning and discussions with pupils. There was insufficient evidence to evaluate standards at the age of seven. Standards are about average at eleven and broadly similar to those observed at the time of the last inspection.

98. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. In Year 1 pupils have used plans of mazes to plan routes and give directions. A well-delivered lesson enabled them to describe and find a position on a map. In Year 3 this work was developed to allow pupils to locate places of interest in a village such as the school, the church and the village store by using grids and co-ordinates, a mathematical link. With support from the technician they were constructing their own village using a computer program. In Year 4 the link with information technology was even more evident. In an excellent lesson the pupils were using the data and information they have gathered using an anemometer, rain gauge, thermometer and weather vane as well as their knowledge of cloud formations to answer such questions as: 'What was the total rainfall for the week? Which wind direction gave the most rain?' On the computers, graphs were produced to illustrate their findings. In Year 5 pupils used a CD-ROM to assist their understanding the physical development of rivers. In Year 6 pupils have a sound knowledge of significant places and environments in the British Isles and Europe and to a lesser extent of the world. In studying the locality of the school pupils have identified places where people have damaged or improved their environment and they have gathered evidence using photographs and maps to support their opinions.
99. Pupils' response to the subject is very good. They are enthusiastic and keen to learn. They respond well to the challenges set by their teachers. They collaborate well together and show an enthusiasm for their environment especially when suggesting improvements to their local derelict sites.
100. The two lessons observed were of very high quality. Teachers consolidate previous learning well and use appropriate questioning to develop pupils' thinking and knowledge. This was well illustrated in a discussion with Year 1 about directions. In an excellent lesson in Year 4 the teacher used the pupils' information technology skills well to interrogate their weather observations. Lessons are well organised and planned with teachers sharing the learning objectives with the pupils at the beginning and end of the lessons.
101. The co-ordinator for geography has identified the need for the curriculum to be revised and has formulated an action plan to bring this and other improvements about. The subject is well monitored and evaluated and good practice is shared with the whole staff. Resources are adequate and these and the locality are well used. Residential visits provide an additional dimension to the pupils' geographical studies.

## **HISTORY**

102. Only three lessons were observed in history. Judgements on standards have been made from the lesson observations, analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning and discussions with pupils. By the ages of seven and eleven standards are average. In the previous inspection standards were also judged to be average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.
103. By the age of seven, pupils are aware of the lives of famous people. In Year 1 a visitor, the local teacher for visually impaired pupils, illustrated the work of Louis Braille by providing a wealth of Braille resources for pupils to experience. In Year 2 pupils showed an understanding of the lives of famous people such as Isaac Newton, Henry VIII, Jesus and Rama and Sita. They nominated the Queen, the Queen Mother, the Prime Minister and Lenny Henry as examples of famous people of today. They were enthralled by the story of Grace Darling and good links were made to geography as they located Northumberland on a map of the British Isles. Music from Fingals Cave was used to illustrate the force of the sea.
104. As aspects of their work on the Tudors, pupils in Year 4 make a detailed study of the Tudor diet and the wives of Henry VIII and compare the houses of the rich and poor. The local study of Bradley in Year 5 encompasses the work of John Wilkinson, the importance of the Inland Waterways and the Black Country. They are comparing the

past with the present, and compiling a database of Bradley for further study. Pupils in Year 6 study Britain since 1930. Their letters to friends inviting them to join the Jarrow March show their understanding of the conditions in the northeast at that time. They know some of the causes of the Second World War and the effects of bombing on the lives of people living in cities such as London, Birmingham and Coventry. In a link with design and technology they have constructed their own Anderson Shelter. They have researched local links by using books of the time from 'Daisy Street School', the predecessor to Wilkinson Primary School. Throughout the school pupils use primary and secondary sources of information and artefacts to find out about the past, including enactment by visiting Tudors for Year 4 and Romans for Year 3. In Year 6 they have used their knowledge of the Second World War to compile questions to conduct a very successful interview with the headteacher. This session was very sensitively managed and made a significant impact to pupils' understanding of what it was like to be a small child during the war years.

105. Pupils' responses to history are good; they enjoy their lessons. They are attentive and keen to contribute their opinions based on the facts they have learned. They work well with their talking partners in the infants and in their discussion groups in the juniors.
106. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers build well on pupils' previous learning and use skilful questioning to develop and challenge them further. This was particularly so when pupils in Year 6 conducted their interviews. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives, which are shared with pupils. This enables pupils to know exactly what is expected of them and supports learning well. Good use of resources also supports the school's practical approach to teaching and learning. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 learning about Louis Braille were shown a copy of 'The Little Red Hen' written in Braille. This supported their understanding of the important contribution that Braille made to the lives of blind people and made a very good link to their social development. Similarly, older pupils in Year 6 talked to their headteacher and a member of the local community about their childhood war experiences. Teachers had prepared pupils well to conduct these interviews through the posing of a series of questions and the very good quality of responses enabled them to recognise and value opinions and first hand evidence.
107. The co-ordinator for history is knowledgeable and has reviewed the scheme of work in the light of the new curriculum orders and the needs of the pupils. The co-ordinator effectively monitors and evaluates the delivery and outcomes of the curriculum. Areas for development have been identified and there are clear plans for the future. Resources are adequate and of good quality. Good use is made of the locality to enhance pupils' historical experiences.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

108. At both seven and eleven standards are in line with those expected nationally and similar to those described at the time of the last inspection. Provision and teaching have improved since the last inspection. All programmes of study are now appropriately emphasised, including monitoring and modelling. Across the school pupils receive a wide range of learning opportunities to develop and extend their skills. The attention given to the subject ensures that there is now a systematic approach to teaching and learning which ensures pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
109. By the age of seven, pupils are confident in word processing. They enter information into the computer and change the size of letters and font. They know how to highlight text, move it around, save work, retrieve and print it. The school's digital camera is a valuable and useful tool used to record visits, experiences and to support learning in a variety of situations. Year 2 pupils are learning to use programs that alter their pictures and they thoroughly enjoyed changing photographs of themselves to create an imaginary gallery. The school's technician makes a very positive contribution to the development of pupils' skills. His enthusiasm and confidence motivates pupils, for

example, when he showed them the inside of the computer and introduced them to technical vocabulary such as 'the mother board' and graphics and sound card. As pupils move through the school their competencies and confidence increase at a steady rate. Year 3 pupils use art programs and word processing skills to design interesting book covers for geography and religious education. They save and retrieve work from floppy discs. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are developing their data handling skills well. They save data collected after class surveys and know how to access information which has been stored in order to add or change the data. They understand the importance of inputting accurate information into a database in order to be able to rely on the validity of their graphs and charts. Pupils enjoy the challenge that these activities provide and are very quick to learn from their mistakes.

110. By Year 6 pupils are becoming very confident users of CD-ROMs and the Internet to support their learning. High quality teaching is enabling pupils to become independent in accessing relevant web sites, adding and locating favourites, storing and downloading useful information. All Year 6 pupils have their own e-mail addresses and the school is making this facility available to all pupils in the near future. Pupils are working with their teachers to design a web sight. These two projects will be an added benefit in developing and widening communication skills. Pupils use the Internet well to access information in other subjects.
111. There are some very good examples of information technology being used constructively to support learning in a range of other subjects. Skimming and scanning skills are used effectively to research information about John Wilkinson the local engineer who built the first iron furnace in Bilston. Geographical understanding is considerably enhanced as pupils discover web sites about local rivers. Pupils use their word processing skills for a variety of purposes such as writing prayers, planning and recording interviews, making comparisons and writing character descriptions.
112. The teaching of information technology is of high quality. Teachers have a very secure understanding of the subject and teach it with considerable enthusiasm and skill. The pupils match their enthusiasm. Staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and present them with challenging activities and tasks which encourage them to enhance their independence in developing and using information and communication skills. Dedicated whole class lessons are successful in teaching specific skills and these are very effectively transferred to other subjects of the curriculum. However, the lack of sufficient computers limits pupils' progress in the subject. This is a weakness identified by the school which will be addressed when improvements to available space enables a computer suite to be developed.
113. The subject co-ordinators are very knowledgeable and enthusiastic and have a clear vision of how they want the subject to develop. As a result, they have made a clear analysis of subject needs and are aware of the need to improve resources. These initiatives are part of the school's action plan and will have a significant impact on the standards pupils attain.

## **MUSIC**

114. Standards in music have improved since the last inspection and are now above those expected nationally for both seven and eleven-year-olds.
115. Music makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, cultural and personal development. The playing of an appropriate piece of music sets a reverent atmosphere for reflection and worship as pupils arrive for assemblies. All pupils have opportunities to develop their singing skills through whole school singing lessons and hymn practices. Songs and hymns are challenging and pupils sing with enthusiasm. Staff help pupils improve their singing by drawing attention to the development of listening skills and the identification of pitch, rhythm, dynamics and musical notation. Pupils are successfully encouraged to sing with accuracy, expression, controlled phrasing and articulation.

116. By the age of seven, pupils have a good sense of rhythm and clap a steady beat. They are developing a mature appreciation of different composers as they listen to Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata and express an opinion on how it made them feel. Pupils know how to hold and play a range of percussion instruments correctly and use them well to make simple compositions.
117. Juniors build successfully on this good start. They sing a range of complex songs confidently and with increasing control of pitch and diction. Pupils are learning how to create different moods and effects. In Year 4 they work together well sharing ideas to compose chords that have a 'dark' quality. Working together in pairs, pupils in Year 5 used a computer program to add 'industrial' sounds to a cantata about 'John Wilkinson'. Older pupils have the opportunity to develop skills in playing a range of instruments including keyboards, recorders, and percussion. In doing so they demonstrate a good understanding of skills in reading 'staff notation' to produce interesting and high quality ensembles.
118. Most eleven-year-olds know how to use a growing musical vocabulary accurately when talking about their work and answering questions posed by their teachers. Pupils have opportunities to reflect on their work and to evaluate their own and other's compositions in order to make improvements.
119. The quality of the teaching is very good and sometimes excellent. Lessons are very imaginatively planned, challenging and stimulating. They include a very good balance of performing, composing and appraising. Specialist teaching and the enthusiasm of teaching staff and support staff in formal lessons, assemblies and school clubs make a very positive contribution to pupils' attitudes and high standards.
120. The co-ordinator has specialist skills that are used very effectively to develop staff confidence. This helps teachers to provide pupils with very good opportunities to extend their creative skills. Resources for the subject are satisfactory overall, but there are insufficient instruments from other cultures to extend further pupils' skills, knowledge and appreciation. The school choir and recorder clubs provide an added dimension, which enhances pupils' musical development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

121. Attainment at the ages of seven and eleven is average and this maintains the standards seen at the last inspection. The high quality of the curriculum and the very good range of extra-curricular activities are major strengths of the subject. Teaching is good and brings about good rates of progress. In Year 4 the excellent teaching helps pupil attain well above average standards.
122. Very good plans in Year 1 chart how pupils develop sequences of skipping, hopping and turning. Pupils gained a great deal of enjoyment from this lesson and the teacher cleverly made links with pupils' current mathematics work in describing position and direction. Pupils worked very hard and, as the teacher maintained the pace of the lesson, pupils' good levels of concentration enabled them to produce sequences of sound quality. In Year 2 the teacher clearly set out what pupils should be planning and gave them time in the lesson to talk to their partners about their performance. This enabled pupils to show very good concentration as they developed balances and sequences of movements involving small and large body parts. The important part of this lesson was the time the teacher allowed individual pupils to explain their work and thinking. Although other pupils were keen to restart their work the teacher encouraged pupils to think about what they wanted to say and then gave them time to speak. This is a key skill that needs to be developed further in all aspects of the subject.
123. Swimming in Year 3 is average. The lesson was tightly planned and there were sufficient adults to provide a good level of supervision. With a clear focus on water



safety, pupils made satisfactory progress and moved from group to group within the lesson as their skills improved. The qualified swimming coaches, teachers and support assistants maintained a good pace to the lesson and pupils worked hard and with obvious enjoyment. Stamina building exercises, stroke improvement and water confidence all played a part in this lesson. Excellent teaching in Year 4 produced a very rigorous warm up session in which pupils worked very hard at every opportunity. They knew exactly what to do to prepare their bodies for exercise and responded extremely well to their teacher working alongside them. Pupils showed excellent initiative and teamwork as they set up the large apparatus very quickly and efficiently. The excellent pace and structure of the lesson and the teachers encouraging suggestions and questions helped pupils produce a wide variety of ways of using the equipment. Careful observations by the teacher ensured that pupils did not stretch themselves beyond their own limits. The teacher used pupils' performance to highlight how well they could achieve before moving to the next piece of apparatus. The evaluations at the end of the lesson were of very good quality and gave pupils plenty of encouragement to try just as hard in the next lesson.

124. In Year 6 another sharp warm up enabled pupils to practise the movements they would need for the lesson. Pupils concentrated well in pairs but tended to be a little noisy at times and when asked questions could answer yes or no which limited their opportunities to think for themselves. However, the very good relationships between the teacher and pupils, good range of apparatus and very good control supported pupils well as they developed sequences. Most pupils are able to analyse and comment on their sequences and work hard to produce an imaginative range of movements.
125. The co-ordinator has produced very good curriculum documentation to support teachers in their planning and all of the lessons observed were carefully drawn from the school's documentation. The very good range of extra-curricular activities and matches helps pupils develop teamwork, social skills and commitment as well as providing them with many opportunities to represent their school and district. The subject is very well led and is well supported by staff members, parents and members of the community.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

126. The comprehensive scheme of work is firmly based on the Wolverhampton Agreed Syllabus. Standards are in line with those suggested for pupils aged seven and exceed the expectations for eleven-year-olds. Pupils study Christianity, Sikhism and Judaism and have a sound understanding of these religions. Pupils in Year 6 have a good understanding of Judaism and accurately identify similarities and differences between the Jewish faith and Christianity. Throughout the school they develop an awareness of the symbols of each faith, aspects of prayer and worship and the rules that govern these faiths. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in the infants and good progress in the juniors.
127. Infant pupils learn about famous stories from the Bible concerning Jesus. Pupils in Year 2 visited the local parish church and were introduced to its major features. They successfully located and understood the purpose of the font, the holy table, candles and crosses. Their wonder at the sound of the organ was surpassed when they recognised one of the songs they sing in assembly being played in such a powerful way. When they visited the Chapel they identified the similarities it had with the main body of the church.
128. In Year 3 pupils extend their knowledge of famine and its effects. They compare the food of the west with the third world diet and learn of the work of two charities that help the starving – Live Aid and Christian Aid. Pupils in Year 4 developed their knowledge and understanding of community in a very good lesson. They identified differences and problems that may occur, for example, the good and bad effect people can have on a community. Using their knowledge of "Fantastic Mr Fox", they surmised what they would

do to provide food for starving people. In Year 5 the pupils were studying the five Ks of Sikhism and their relevance to the followers of that religion. In an excellent lesson in Year 6 pupils exhibited good understanding of aspects of the Jewish faith. They described the celebration of the Sabbath, other customs and religious celebrations and, as a class, identified the Ten Commandments. They showed sympathy and empathy for prejudice and persecution, giving examples from their own lives and recounting circumstances in the life of Anne Frank and their studies of World War Two. They were very moved when recalling in their thoughts the imagined visit to the neighbourhood by the Nazi troops and the fears the Frank family must have had.

129. The limited classroom teaching observed and the teaching that took place during assemblies were very good overall. Teachers draw on a whole range of resources, including music, artefacts, visits, videos and their own personal experiences, to support the pupils' learning. A strength of teaching is the use of discussion and debate to explore the significance of religious faith. All teachers had very good relationships with their pupils, inspiring trust and confidence to enable pupils to have the confidence to express their thoughts and opinions. Lessons are thoroughly planned and teachers share the learning objectives with pupils at the beginning of each lesson. The co-ordinator provides good support and monitors and evaluates the provision. The school makes good use of the locality and visitors to the school to enhance the curriculum.