

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PETER'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bloxwich, Walsall

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 104234

Headteacher: Mr John Gubbins

Reporting inspector: Dr Brian Male
14906

Dates of inspection: 30th October – 2nd November 2000

Inspection number: 225174

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Lichfield Road
Bloxwich
Walsall
West Midlands
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Telephone number: 01922 710872

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Pat O'Loan

Date of previous inspection: January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Dr Brian Male 14906	Registered inspector	Areas of Learning for Children in the Foundation Stage English as an Additional Language English Science	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results & achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led & managed?
Mrs Sue Boyle 19419	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values & personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr Stephen Toon 4237	Team inspector	Special Educational Needs Mathematics Design & Technology Music Physical Education	
Ms Anita Dee 23548	Team inspector	Equal Opportunities Information Technology Art Geography History	How good are the curricular & other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This Catholic Aided school serves the Bloxwich area of Walsall. At the time of the inspection there were 230 pupils on roll in 7 classes. A further 20 pupils attended the nursery on a part-time basis. Most pupils start school with standards of attainment above those usually expected. Thirteen per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals which is below the national average. Nineteen per cent of the pupils are on the Special Needs Register which is in line with the national average. There is one pupil for whom English is an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a school with a caring and supportive ethos where children feel secure and valued. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school and by the age of eleven standards of attainment are above the national average, but generally in line with those of similar schools. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and the school offers satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Children behave very well and relate well with each other
- Children have very positive attitudes to their work and are keen to learn
- The school has a caring ethos and forms a supportive community
- Children with special educational needs are very well integrated into the classroom
- The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development
- The school is well supported by parents

What could be improved

- The educational provision in the nursery needs to be improved
- A wider range of teaching and learning strategies is needed to ensure maximum progress
- Information from the assessment of pupils' attainment could be used more specifically to promote learning
- The role of the senior management team needs strengthening to enable it to function effectively

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 and has made satisfactory progress since then. Standards of attainment have gradually risen in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2, and the school has maintained its very good standards of behaviour. The quality of teaching has remained satisfactory overall. In terms of the key issues raised, the school now makes greater use of learning objectives in lesson planning, although some of these could be sharper. Many steps are now taken to monitor pupils' progress. There are more investigations in mathematics and science, but these still need further development. Some steps have been taken to improve multi-cultural education, but it could still be a more pervasive part of the curriculum.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	C	B	A	A
mathematics	C	C	B	C
science	A	C	C	D

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The scores in the 2000 tests were much lower than in 1999. This was due to the presence of a larger than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Standards are higher in the present Year 6 group and are likely to be above the national average in all three subjects at the end of the year. These standards are in line with the average for schools with similar backgrounds. Pupils enter the nursery with standards already slightly above those expected. Standards are generally in line with those expected at the ages of five and seven. Pupils make overall satisfactory progress across the school, with some good progress in Year 6 that brings standards back above average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children have very good attitudes to school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally very good in class and around the school. Pupils act very sensibly when unsupervised and are courteous and considerate.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good across the school. Children are caring and thoughtful of others. They co-operate willingly and play very well with each other.
Attendance	There is an average rate of attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

In the school as a whole, two thirds of the teaching is satisfactory and a quarter is good. About a tenth of the teaching is unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory teaching is in the nursery and near the top of Key Stage 2. Where the teaching is good, there is good pace and challenge to the pupils and lessons build well on what pupils already know. Where teaching

is unsatisfactory, the pupils are engaged in low-level activities or work they can already do. This inhibits learning. Teaching is most effective at the very top of Key Stage 2 where pupils make good progress. There is successful teaching of both literacy and numeracy.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum covers the required subjects but is heavily balanced towards the core subjects of English and mathematics. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes appropriate provision for these pupils and provides some good quality support from ancillary staff. The Code of Practice is fully followed, and there is particularly good integration for children in the normal work of the class.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision for children's moral development with understanding and sensitivities well established. There is good provision for spiritual and social development. Cultural development is generally satisfactory, although multi-cultural provision could be further extended.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has a caring ethos and provides a supportive community. Children enjoy coming to school and feel secure and valued.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher administers the school well and financial management is very good. The role of the senior management team needs strengthening to ensure that the school's policies are carried out effectively and that maximum progress is promoted.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities effectively under the leadership of a very capable Chair. They are developing a clear overview of the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school takes many effective steps to monitor its performance and the progress of its pupils, and good plans are drawn up for action. The implementation of these plans now needs to be ensured and evaluated.
The strategic use of resources	The school follows the principles of best value and ensures that resources are used effectively. The school offers satisfactory value for money.

There is a good level of teaching and support staff. The building is spacious and well maintained and offers good accommodation. Resources are generally adequate except in the nursery and in the quality and range of books in the libraries. There is no designated outside play area for children under five.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The attitudes and values the school promotes• The progress children make• The support given to individual children• The high standards of behaviour• The way the school has moved on since the last inspection• That children enjoy coming to school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many parents would like to see a wider range of extra-curricular activities

Parents were supportive of the school at the meeting with inspectors, and in their replies to the questionnaire. The inspection generally agrees with parents' positive views, although progress is satisfactory rather than good. The range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory, although aimed mainly at older pupils. This may be the source of some parents' discontent.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Pupils enter the nursery with standards of attainment already slightly above those expected for children of this age. Pupils make satisfactory overall progress through the school and standards are above average by the time they leave at the age of eleven. Standards are broadly average across the school, and most progress is made at the top of Key Stage 2.

The school's targets and pupils' achievement

2. The school's official targets are based on predictions from past performance, and these are not always sufficiently high to raise standards. For example, the official targets for 2001 are for 76 per cent of pupils to gain Level 4 in English and 64 per cent in mathematics. However, 90 per cent of pupils gained Level 4 in both subjects in 1999. There is some inconsistency in the target setting process as individual pupil targets are higher than this, and therefore more appropriate. The targets are updated in the Autumn Term, and these are higher and so more appropriate for the present Year 6. However, they do not serve as long term targets for the school.
3. The high standards attained by pupils by the time they leave the school at eleven years old represent satisfactory achievement and satisfactory progress. The standards attained by the time pupils are seven years old are satisfactory in terms of national standards, but could be much higher for these pupils.

Children under five

4. Pupils enter the school as four year olds with standards of attainment slightly above the national average. They make generally satisfactory progress through the nursery and the reception year, and standards of attainment are above those usually found in social development and in knowledge and understanding of the world, and broadly in line with expectations in all the other areas of learning.

Key Stage 1

5. In national tests for seven year olds in 2000, the overall standards, as measured by average point scores, were above average in reading and mathematics, and below average in writing. Compared to schools of similar background, scores were average in reading, below average in writing and above average in mathematics. Scores were higher in the 2000 national tests than in 1999 in all three aspects. Over the last four years, the overall standards have fluctuated down and then back up again.
6. Inspection evidence shows that standards this year are still in line with the national average in reading and mathematics, but below average in writing. Standards in science, information technology, physical education and music are also generally in line with those usually found. Insufficient lessons were seen in other subjects for an overall judgement to be made.

Key Stage 2

7. In national tests for 11 year olds in 2000, standards were in line with the national average in English, but well below average in mathematics and science. Compared to schools of similar background, scores were average in English, well below average in mathematics and in the bottom five per cent in science. Scores were much lower than in the 1999 national tests and lower than scores over the previous four years, particularly in mathematics and science. The lower scores in 2000 are

associated with the presence in the class of an unusually high number of pupils with special educational needs.

8. Inspection evidence indicates that the standards of the present pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are much higher than last year in mathematics and science, and similar in English. Standards in all three subjects are above the national average. Standards are likely to be in line with the average for schools with a similar background.
9. Standards in information technology, history, geography, music and physical education are in line with those usually found. Insufficient lessons were seen in other subjects for an overall judgement to be made.

Progress of different groups

10. There has been a disparity between standards at the end of the two key stages, apart from last year where scores at the end of Key Stage 2 were unusually low. Pupils make generally satisfactory progress and attain average standards up to the age of ten, then make good progress and attain high standards by the age of eleven. This good progress results from the higher challenge and the clear focus of the teaching in the Year 6 class.
11. Pupils with special educational needs often make good progress in meeting the targets set in their individual education plans. The progress of boys and girls, and of higher and lower attaining pupils, is in line with the general progress of the school: quicker at the top of Key Stage 2 than elsewhere. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level (Level 3) at the end of Key Stage 1 is below the national average, whilst the proportion attaining the higher level (Level 5) at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with the national average. There is room for higher challenge to the higher attaining pupils.

Literacy and numeracy

12. Within English, standards of reading, speaking and listening are much higher than writing at both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 1, no pupil attains the higher level (Level 3) in writing, and at the end of Key Stage 2, fewer pupils attain the higher level (Level 5) than in reading or in mathematics and science, apart from in 2000 which was an unusual year. This is associated with the amount of practice pupils have in writing and the focus of teaching within this aspect. Standards in the number aspect of mathematics are higher than in other areas of mathematics across the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils like their school, and have very good attitudes to work. Older pupils show great pride, and want to show off their school. They mostly like their teachers and talk about school very positively and enthusiastically. They come to lessons interested and expecting to work. However, they rarely demonstrate great enthusiasm. This is not because pupils themselves lack enthusiasm, but because generally lessons do not enthuse.
14. Behaviour at the school is very good. Pupils rarely need to be told to behave but if they are, they respond immediately. They move around the school quietly and calmly. They play well in the playground and enjoy their playtimes. They are sometimes fidgety in collective worship, but this is because their interest is not held sufficiently. They are always polite and respect each other and adults. There are no exclusions for unacceptable behaviour.

15. Pupils' personal development is very good. They are mature and responsible. They get on and work well together. They share materials and equipment well. Any disagreements that arise from being expected to share are almost always resolved amicably. They can be trusted to be sensible when working outside classrooms or going inside to use the toilet at breaktimes. They want to help their teachers and readily volunteer to help when there are jobs to be done, such as taking the register to the school office. Even the youngest children carry out these sorts of tasks confidently. However, opportunities to contribute to the life of the school are mostly for older pupils, and are too few to give them the chance to use their initiative. They show great sensitivity towards all other children.
16. Relationships in the school, particularly between pupils, are very good. Pupils show caring attitudes towards each other and want to help each other. In the reception class, pupils are encouraged to help each other dress after doing physical education. A good example of this was one boy meticulously and painstakingly doing up every button on another boy's shirt. This was a difficult task and required a great deal of patience and co-operation by both boys. Relationships between teachers and pupils are generally good. Some teachers have established very good relationships with pupils with a high level of mutual respect. However, a few teachers can sound unnecessarily harsh at times when speaking to pupils.
17. Attendance at the school is in line with the national average. Pupils arrive very punctually at the start of the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory across the school, but there is a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching in the nursery and near the top of Key Stage 2. Teaching is most effective at the very top of Key Stage 2 where pupils make good progress. There is successful teaching of both literacy and numeracy. The overall quality of teaching ensures that pupils make satisfactory progress.
19. In the school as a whole, two thirds of the teaching is satisfactory and a quarter is good. About a tenth of the teaching is unsatisfactory. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is significant and needs to be addressed urgently even though much of it is associated with some temporary arrangements. At both key stages, teaching is satisfactory overall in English, mathematics, science, information technology, music and physical education. Insufficient teaching was seen in other subjects for any overall judgement to be made.

Under fives

20. The teaching of children under five is always at least satisfactory in the reception class, but unsatisfactory in over a fifth of the lessons in the nursery. The unsatisfactory teaching results from lack of challenge to the children so that their learning is not sufficiently extended by the activities in which they engage. Too often, there is no clear learning goal to the activities and the children are given too little scope to find out things for themselves, or engage in the range of practical explorations that form the basis for later understanding. Children spend long periods sitting listening to stories or other talk from adults without being encouraged to express themselves sufficiently or think for themselves. In some lessons, such as physical education in the hall, activities are inappropriate for young children.

21. The new national Foundation Stage Curriculum is not yet fully implemented in either the nursery or the reception class. The activities in the reception class are generally appropriate anyway, and the experienced teacher ensures that the children learn the things they should, but both classes now need to take account of the new curriculum and adjust their syllabus to the new requirements. This would be an opportunity for the range of activities and the approach to learning in the nursery to be reconsidered. The nursery staff need to take a clear lead from the reception teacher in this process.

Key Stage 1

22. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall. Just over a quarter of the lessons seen during the inspection were good, two thirds satisfactory and only one was unsuccessful.
23. Relationships are good and pupils are managed well. There is a good level of support for these young pupils. Lessons are appropriately prepared and planned effectively. Time and resources are used effectively. There is some effective use of questioning that enhances learning by making pupils think carefully and express their thoughts; for instance in a Year 1 English lesson where pupils were talking about toys they had brought in. The use of their own toys made the lesson more immediate and enhanced motivation. Some lessons have good pace and challenge; for instance, a Year 2 mathematics lesson where, after some quick paced work on odd and even numbers, pupils were challenged to devise a strategy for adding on 9. They responded well to the opportunity this gave to devise their own methods and explain their thinking. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, the level of challenge is not always sufficient, nor the learning objectives sufficiently specific, to ensure that pupils make more than satisfactory progress.

Key Stage 2

24. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall at Key Stage 2. A third of the lessons seen were good, almost a half were satisfactory and about a sixth were unsatisfactory. The good teaching was mainly at the beginning and end of the key stage, and the unsatisfactory teaching was mainly in Year 5.
25. The unsatisfactory teaching was all due to inappropriate work being set, which failed to build on what pupils had already learned. For instance, in a Year 5 English lesson, all pupils were asked to order six simple sentences and write them out neatly even though many were assessed as already having achieved Level 3 in writing and some Level 4.
26. There is some good and very good teaching at the top of the key stage with a particularly good focus on specific learning objectives. These, together with very good relationships and a high level of challenge, ensure the good progress that pupils make through Year 6 resulting in above average standards. For example, in a very good Year 6 science lesson, there was a high degree of challenge with pupils asked to find ways of varying current through a circuit. This built very well on what they had learned in previous lessons, gave them opportunities to find things out for themselves, and addressed specifically the requirements of the higher level of attainment. Pupils had a very good understanding of what was expected and were keen and interested to use the good range of equipment. Teaching at the beginning of the key stage often enthuses the pupils and excites their interest. For example, pupils were excited by their discoveries in a Year 3 science lesson on magnets, and later the same class was enthusiastic in their tasting of sandwiches as part of a technology lesson.

Teaching of different groups

27. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is generally effective and there is good teaching from support assistants. Children with specific needs are very well integrated into the classrooms and their needs are very well met.
28. The individual targets for pupils identify those having a potential for high attainment, but these are not always specifically targeted within lessons. Work set for these pupils is not always sufficiently challenging, except at the top of Key Stage 2.

General

29. Most teachers have good relationships with their class and manage their pupils well. Pupils respond by taking a keen interest in their learning and sustaining their concentration well. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is generally effective across the school, with key skills such as phonics taught generally effectively. Lessons are generally well prepared and the methods used appropriate.
30. Some lessons, particularly at Key Stage 2, are timetabled for very long periods. The learning objectives of these lessons seldom require such a long time and so the rate of learning is too slow. Even where the objectives are appropriate, it is often difficult for pupils to sustain their interest in one topic for so long.
31. Some good learning objectives are set in lessons, but sometimes there are too many of these to be attained. Sometimes teachers are over-optimistic about what can be learned in a given period, and at other times do not focus sufficiently sharply on an objective. For instance, the Year 2 mathematics lesson mentioned above as starting very well, went on to look at dividing 2 digit numbers and so lost both pace and focus.
32. The teaching of writing has not produced standards as high as in other aspects of English or other subjects. There is a good focus on skills and aspects such as punctuation and spelling, but too few opportunities for pupils to engage in sustained independent writing where they can practise these skills and put the various elements together. Too few opportunities are created in subjects other than English for such sustained writing. There are also few opportunities for pupils to reflect upon what they have written in terms of its quality and clarity, or to make amendments that would improve these. Pupils work very well together and could co-operate in such appraisal.
33. Across the school, there could be more opportunities for pupils to be more independent and more actively engaged in their learning. The great majority of lessons are teacher-directed, and instructions are usually so explicit that pupils have too few opportunities to plan and evaluate their activities, a requirement of the National Curriculum. In many class discussion sessions, pupils are required to give only short answers to direct questions from the teacher, and this gives pupils too little time to explore their thinking or explain their actions. Although pupils often co-operate in set tasks, and do so very well, little use is made of opportunities to discuss answers or activities in pairs or small groups. The prevalent teaching and learning style is one of teacher explanation followed by a pupil activity and, whilst this is effective for many learning tasks, it does not involve pupils in a sufficiently wide range of learning.
34. The school has made good progress in the assessment of pupils' attainment and analysis of their progress. The information now held is not always used sufficiently specifically to ensure that lessons build precisely on what pupils already know and can do, or that the level of challenge is appropriate to all the pupils in the class. Individual targets are set, but there are few occasions on which groups of pupils with

similar learning needs are identified and tracked across the key stages with teaching targeted specifically to their differing needs.

The quality of learning

35. The quality of learning, and the rate at which pupils acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding, is generally satisfactory across the school, but good in Year 6. Pupils are keen to learn, and they work hard in lessons, sustaining their concentration well. In most lessons, pupils have a good understanding of what is expected of them, and the individual targets are effective in showing them what they need to do to improve, although some are of too general a nature and set over too long a time-scale to impact directly on learning within lessons.

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

36. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum which includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and meets the statutory requirements. Arrangements for health, drugs and sex education are satisfactory. Personal, social education and moral education are included in the provision for religious education, which is related to the local diocesan requirements. The school contributes effectively to pupils' academic, social and physical development and prepares them adequately for the next stage of their education. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced successfully and are having a positive impact on pupil attainments. Pupils' special educational needs are identified and individual educational plans are used to set learning targets that are effective in ensuring pupils make satisfactory progress.
37. The curriculum for children under five has not yet been amended to take account of the requirements of the new national Foundation Stage, which started in September. Some of the activities and approaches within the present curriculum, particularly in the nursery, do not even fit with the previous national requirements.
38. The school has developed detailed policies and schemes of work for all core and foundation subjects. These relate very closely to the national Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) guidance and contain some very good learning activities and structures for lessons. However, the school has significantly reduced the allocation of time for the foundation subjects to accommodate greater emphasis on literacy and numeracy, but has not made the appropriate amendments to the QCA schemes which were devised for a much longer time allocation. As a result, the programmes are not always balanced and coherent. The monitoring of the curriculum has not sufficiently assessed the impact of the current balance of time on pupils' progress and attainment in foundation subjects.
39. The additional time for literacy and numeracy is effective in extending the knowledge and understanding of older pupils at Key Stage 2. However, numeracy sessions which are planned for ninety minutes for younger pupils at Key Stage 2 result in a loss of the pace of pupils' work and loss of concentration. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology to support and enhance the curriculum across a range of subjects. However, insufficient opportunities are planned for the application of literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills to develop writing for specific purposes, or the use of graphical presentation and analysis in science. The large range of expectations set out in the medium-term planning result in learning objectives in short-term planning which are too general, and often too many, to support assessment effectively. Assessment does not then inform future planning to ensure progression is linked to what pupils know and understand.

40. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is generally appropriate for their needs, and there are some very good arrangements for integrating these pupils into the general curriculum.
41. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum for junior pupils. These focus on football, netball, short tennis and cricket, and add significantly to the skills in physical education and their social development. Pupils have achieved success regularly in competitions with other schools. Involvement in the 'TOP' sports national initiative has contributed significantly to pupils' development of their skills and progress in games, as well as raising the confidence and enthusiasm of teachers. A satisfactory range of educational visits are planned throughout the school in support of the curriculum which widen pupils' understanding of their immediate and local environment and community. These include visits to local shops and farms. Residential visits for outdoor activities are arranged for older pupils. These are well attended and very popular with pupils. The school ensures that these visits are accessible to all pupils through successfully securing sponsorship for pupils where appropriate. Specialist instrumental tuition involving woodwind and stringed instruments is provided in conjunction with the local education authority. These enhance pupils' musical skills, understanding of musical notation and enhance their interest and enthusiasm for music. The school also makes specific curriculum provision for groups of pupils through booster classes and support for pupils wishing to apply for places at the grammar school, all in addition to normal school time.
42. The school has developed successful links with its parish community. The priest takes regular assemblies and mass is held at the school bringing parents, governors, grandparents and other members of the community into the school. Pupils' awareness of the needs of others is raised through involvement in activities and collections for a range of charities. The school and pupils benefit from the support of parents in classrooms and from their support for school initiatives. There is an active parents' association, which supplements school funds and generates support for school initiatives. The Linus Club provides successful before and after school care for pupils and is well supported and valued by parents. Similarly, there has been strong support for a weekly mother and toddler group. Parents support the school's homework policy conscientiously and have contributed very effectively to improvements in pupils' attainments in reading following an 'enabling reading' project. Productive links have been made through parents to businesses, which have provided computer equipment and systems. The local Education and Business Partnership sponsored the school's successful Investors in People award, and will contribute to courses for nursery nurse qualifications for teaching assistants. There are strong links with the secondary school into which most pupils transfer. Teachers from the secondary school take their prospective pupils for a day in the summer term and establish effective liaison links for special educational needs. The National Numeracy Strategy 'bridging units' have been used successfully with older pupils to ensure work which started in the last weeks of primary school is continued in the first weeks of the secondary school. Work with a local 'benchmarked' school has led to the sharing of good practice in special education needs and early years. Discussions between the schools have resulted in a joint in-service day on teaching and learning.

Pupils' personal development - including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

43. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. There is a very positive and caring ethos in the school to which pupils respond well. Some teachers and adults are good role models in the way in which they value others by listening to them and treating them with respect. This is very effectively supporting spiritual development and helping pupils to relate to others well and sensitively. A good example of this is the supportive way in which pupils relate to those pupils who have physical disabilities. Spiritual development in the sense of awe and wonder is less evident. Acts of collective worship have a good community feel, but opportunities to engage and involve pupils are not well developed.
44. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils have a very clear sense of right and wrong. They behave very well and are careful to observe the school rules that are clearly displayed in classrooms and around the school.
45. Provision for pupils' social development is good. In lessons, there are some good opportunities for pupils to work together, especially in the Year 6 class. For example, pupils worked very well together in constructing electrical circuits in a science lesson. Younger pupils are encouraged to help each other, for example, to get dressed after physical education lessons. Year 6 pupils help with tasks such as preparing the hall for assembly, but generally opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school community by taking responsibility are too few. A good example of the way in which some pupils are learning about taking responsibility is the school committee, which meets termly to discuss issues that are of concern to pupils. However, the numbers of children benefiting this way can only be small.
46. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have sound cultural experiences through the school choir, visiting poets and visits to museums and places of interest. Provision for multicultural education, which was a key issue at the last inspection, has improved. The improved provision has been achieved mainly by providing positive role models and improving resources for multi-cultural education. There is still room to develop this aspect to provide experiences that celebrate the richness of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Assessment

47. The previous inspection suggested that the school needed to improve its assessment procedures and to make more use of assessment information in teaching. The school has responded well to the first of these issues and there are now a good range of effective methods for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress. Individual targets are set for pupils and are helpful in allowing pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. In some cases, these targets are rather general ("improve writing") or over too long a timescale to allow pupils to receive the positive feedback of improvement. The overall process is, however, very helpful.
48. Progress in the second issue has not been so quick. Although the assessment data are well analysed and some perceptive conclusions drawn from the analysis, these are not yet having sufficient impact on teaching and learning. Examples have already been given in the 'Teaching' section of this report of lessons that take no account of the levels the pupils have already attained. This also applies at a wider

level to adjustments to the overall curriculum provision in the light of the progress of year groups, or groups of pupils within them.

49. Arrangements for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs are generally effective. Targets in individual education plans vary like other individual targets, but are generally effective. There are effective systems for monitoring progress and reviewing these targets.

How the school cares for pupils

50. A strength of the school is the special care and support it gives to those pupils who have special educational needs, which enables them to be fully integrated into the life of the school.
51. The school has appropriate procedures in place for the health and safety of pupils. Generally, the arrangements for child protection are good. However, there is scope for more regular training to include all staff, to ensure that they are clear about what they should do if a child makes a disclosure.
52. The school has worked hard to ensure that standards of behaviour remain high and has established a climate where good behaviour is normal. The behaviour policy is based on rewarding pupils when they behave well and imposing sanctions for poor behaviour, and is effective. However, most pupils in this school are capable of behaving well without the need for rewards; for example, they work hard and use the computers well when working outside classrooms. Having established this very good behaviour, the school might now look towards giving pupils more opportunities to develop self-discipline, without the need for extrinsic rewards.
53. The school has appropriate procedures for monitoring attendance. Certificates are awarded to promote attendance, but as attendance rates have remained fairly static since the last inspection, this suggests they are having little impact.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. The school has a good partnership with parents. Parents and carers are mostly positive in their views of the school.
55. Information for parents is plentiful. There are regular workshops for parents, and the recent one on information and communication technology was well attended and much appreciated by parents. A good number came into school to look at the teaching of mathematics. There is also a good amount of written information. The written information is quite helpful; for example, the sheet which tells parents what children should be expected to know and to do by the end of the reception year.
56. The information in pupils' annual reports is variable in quality. The nursery reports are based on the subjects of the National Curriculum, which is inappropriate. Generally, reports have information about the progress pupils have made and they contain lots of information. They are often detailed, but are not always clearly evaluative.
57. The school successfully involves parents in its work by seeking their views about future developments through the school improvement plan, and asking for comments on policy.

58. Parents have a significant impact on the work of the school. A good example is the support they give reading. Nearly all parents listen to their children read on a very regular basis, and the home-school reading records are well used by staff and parents to exchange information.
59. A number of parents help in the classrooms, some showing a very high level of commitment and are a very valuable resource.
60. The parent teacher association is very supportive and in ways that enhance the curriculum; for example, it paid for a visiting poet.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

The headteacher and senior staff

61. The headteacher administers the school well and has ensured that the school's aims are met in terms of creating a supportive ethos within the school where pupils feel secure and valued. Financial management is very good and there is careful stewardship of resources. The school's development plan is comprehensive and set clearly in the framework of the budget. The quality of monitoring and analysis of information is good, and there have been some effective plans made; for instance, to improve the quality of teaching. Where these plans affect the curriculum and teaching, they have not always been carried out as fully as in other areas. For example, the school has already identified the need to improve teaching in the nursery, but has not yet carried it out.
62. Teachers with subject responsibilities generally manage their subjects effectively, and the co-ordinator for mathematics has been particularly effective in ensuring that the National Numeracy Strategy has been well introduced. The role of the Senior Management Team is not clearly defined and the responsibilities of the team need strengthening, particularly with regard to the curriculum. This would help ensure that the necessary actions are taken to impact on areas needing improvement.
63. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is effectively managed. The Code of Practice is fully implemented and the work of support assistants is well co-ordinated.
64. The management of the provision for children under five has not been effective. Although areas of improvement needed in the nursery have been well identified by the reception teacher, they have not been carried out.

The governors

65. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities effectively under the leadership of a very capable Chair. They are developing a clear overview of the work of the school. They ensure that the school meets all statutory requirements, and exercise effective oversight of the budget.

Monitoring, evaluation and targets

66. The school is now taking many effective steps to monitoring and evaluate its performance. There is effective analysis of test results and other measures of pupils' progress. There is an effective programme of monitoring lessons from which some very helpful points for improvement are derived. The individual progress of pupils against their targets is monitored, but the same process is not always applied to groups with programmes for intervention and progress tracked across the school. The individual targets do not always fit with the official overall school targets which

are derived from predictions based on past performance. These are too low to be effective targets that will improve standards. The practice of predicting what attainment will be, rather than basing teaching on the levels currently attained, is not helpful in devising effective programmes.

The budget and best value

67. The budget is set carefully by the headteacher and governors, and due account taken of changes in income and expenditure. The school development plan is a useful document in ensuring that budget decisions can be linked to educational priorities. Specific grants are allocated appropriately, and the principles of best value are applied.
68. The school receives an income per pupil in line with the national average. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school and the school provides a satisfactory standard of teaching. The school therefore provides satisfactory value for money.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

69. There is a good level of teaching and support staff whose qualifications and experience are generally well matched to the needs of the curriculum. The practice of staffing the nursery with nursery nurses is being revised and this will improve this match.
70. The school building is spacious and well maintained and offers an overall good level of accommodation, although one classroom is quite small and access from the "mobile" classroom is difficult. The recent creation of small rooms from outside spaces has greatly increased flexibility in accommodating groups. The intended redesign of the nursery and reception class areas will provide the needed improvement to facilities for play and practical activities. At the moment there is no designated outside play area for children under five.
71. There is a generally adequate level of resources across the school, except in the provision of equipment in the nursery and in the quality and range of books in the libraries.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. In order to build on the developments already being made and to ensure maximum progress, the school needs to:
- 1) Improve provision for children under five years old by:
 - implementing fully the national Foundation Stage curriculum
 - ensuring that children are engaged in a wide range of interesting and stimulating activities
 - setting clear learning objectives for activities that are based on what the children already know and can do
 - giving children sufficient independence to explore and find things out
 - engaging children in more open-ended talk that encourages them to think and to express themselves.
 - 2) Improve the use of assessment information so that:
 - learning objectives build precisely on what children already know and can do
 - the level of challenge is appropriate for all children in the class

- teaching can be targeted to take account of the varying progress of different groups of children through the school.
- 3) Widen the range of teaching and learning strategies used so that:
- children are given more independence in their learning, so that they can select methods and materials as the National Curriculum requires
 - children are given more opportunities to discuss and reflect upon their work
 - children are involved in more investigative and problem-solving activities, especially in mathematics and science
 - lessons are exciting, stimulating and challenging.
- 4) Strengthen the role of the Senior Management Team so that:
- roles and responsibilities are clarified
 - effective support can be given where it is needed
 - effective action is taken to ensure that the school's policies are fully carried out, and that pupils make the maximum progress.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

73. Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	68
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

74. Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Un-satisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	1	24	63	12		

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

75. Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	10	230
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/a	30

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	45

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

76. Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

77. 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	11	16	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	10
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	24	24	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (91)	89 (98)	96 (89)
	National	82 (80)	83 (85)	87 (83)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	10	10
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	24	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (94)	96 (94)	96 (94)
	National	82 (80)	86 (83)	87 (81)

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

78. 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	19	10	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	18	16
	Girls	9	8	7
	Total	26	26	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (81)	90 (66)	79 (78)
	National	70 (63)	69 (62)	78 (68)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	18	16
	Girls	8	8	8
	Total	23	26	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (69)	90 (72)	83 (75)
	National	68 (63)	69 (64)	75 (68)

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

79. Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	250
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

81. Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.5
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	131

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	20.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

80. Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	-	-
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.

82. Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	401,489
Total expenditure	412,022
Expenditure per pupil	1,792
Balance brought forward from previous year	30,847
Balance carried forward to next year	20,314

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

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	250
Number of questionnaires returned	85

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	35	1.5	2.5	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	45	2.5	1	2.5
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	39	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	44	6.5	1	6.5
The teaching is good.	56	40	0	1.5	2.5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	55	10	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	39	5	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	32	1.5	1.5	0
The school works closely with parents.	27	62	8	1.5	1.5
The school is well led and managed.	50	45	0	2.5	2.5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	45	5	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	39	18	13	10

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

84. **Standards of attainment by the end of the reception year are generally in line with those usually found. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection.**
85. Most children enter the nursery with standards of social development, attainment in language and literacy, and knowledge and understanding of the world slightly above those usually found. They make generally satisfactory progress through the foundation stage but much slower progress through the nursery than through the reception class. The curriculum has not yet been amended to take account of the new national Foundation Stage Curriculum. Some of the activities and approaches, particularly in the nursery, do not even fit with the previous national requirements.

Quality of teaching

86. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory in the reception class, but is unsatisfactory in a fifth of lessons in the nursery. This is a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching. The unsatisfactory teaching results from lack of challenge to the children so that their learning is not sufficiently extended by the activities in which they engage. Too often, there is no clear learning goal to the activities, and the children are given too little scope to find out things for themselves or engage in the range of practical explorations that form the basis for later understandings. For example, a model-making activity gave children no opportunity to consider their own designs or find different ways of fixing things together. Children spend long periods sitting listening to stories or other talk from teachers without being sufficiently encouraged to express themselves or think for themselves. In some lessons, such as physical education in the hall, activities are inappropriate for young children.
87. The new national Foundation Stage Curriculum is not yet fully implemented in either the nursery or the reception class. The activities in the reception class are generally appropriate anyway, and the experienced teacher ensures that the children learn the things they should, but both classes now need to take account of the new curriculum and adjust their syllabus to the new requirements. This would be an opportunity for the range of activities and the approach to learning in the nursery to be reconsidered. The nursery staff need to take a clear lead from the reception teacher in this process.

Personal, social and emotional development

88. Personal and social development is generally good. Children are able to work well as part of their group and class. They are aware of the expectations of the school and the need to consider others. Even the youngest children are willing to listen to others and to wait their turn, for example, when answering questions about a story in the nursery. They are interested in their work, especially in activities such as making sandwiches in the reception class, and are keen to learn. Even the youngest children are able to maintain attention, concentrate and sit quietly when appropriate. The area that needs further development is that of independence, especially in the nursery where children need more opportunities to explore materials and find out things for themselves. The Foundation Stage Curriculum suggests that “there should be opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and also those they plan or initiate for themselves”. At the moment the balance is too far towards the former.

Communication, language and literacy

89. Attainment in language and literacy is in line with that normally found. Children enjoy listening to stories and sustain attentive listening well. They respond well to stories, songs and rhymes, and children in the reception class take particular pleasure in joining in songs. Most children speak clearly and with confidence. Some younger children in the nursery are already able to explain quite complex things, such as the methods they are using to make a model aeroplane, and use their imaginations well to suggest how it will fly. Some younger children are already able to recognise simple words; for example, when asked which picture on a display related to Miss Holly's hat, one girl said, "You can tell they're feathers, because it says so underneath!". Older children are able to use phonic knowledge to read and write simple words, and some are already combining words into sentences.

Mathematical development

90. Attainment in mathematics by the age of five is at the level expected of children of this age. Progress through the nursery is relatively slow with much time being spent on numbers up to five that children already know. The activities planned here do not build sufficiently on what the children already know in a way that extends their learning. Opportunities are missed to develop mathematical concepts through play activities through questions such as "How many more will you need?" or "Which one is heavier". This is better in the reception class where children are introduced to a wide range of mathematical ideas and operations. Children develop a good understanding of number and many are able to carry out operations such as addition and subtraction. They are able to name simple shapes, such as circles and triangles, and know something of their properties; for example that the triangle has three sides.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

91. Children start with already well developed knowledge and understanding of the world and make satisfactory progress. They are able to talk about their immediate environment, and even some of the younger children were able to describe the way they came to school. They are able to talk about similarities and difference between objects such as toys in their box, saying that some are shiny, and others rough. Children in the reception class were able to operate the "roamer" entering an appropriate sequence of instructions that enabled the machine to follow the intended route.

Physical development

92. The provision for physical development is unsatisfactory in the nursery. There is no designated outside play area and most physical activities lack clear learning goals. The physical education lessons in the hall are mostly unsatisfactory as children are expected to sit and wait for long periods before taking part, one at a time, in an activity, such as jumping off a very high box, that they could not do without an adult holding them. These activities have little relation to the expectations of the Foundation Curriculum or the previously required areas of learning. The range of tools and equipment available to younger children is restricted and they are given too little opportunity to find out what they can do. Provision is better in the reception class, and standards of development are in line with those expected by the time children are five.

Creative development

93. Standards of attainment in the area of creative development are in line with those expected for the majority of five-year-olds by the time children are five. Provision in the reception class is better than in the nursery, where activities are not sufficiently structured to encourage pupils to think about the colours, textures, shape and form of their pictures and models. For example, several children were observed putting

successive layers of paint onto paper until it was a uniform, and somewhat thick, brown. This was accepted by the adults without question. Children develop well in singing during the reception class, they can sing songs from memory and match movements to music well. The use of imagination in creative work is not well developed in either class.

Accommodation and resources

94. The accommodation is adequate for the number of children but is not used most effectively as there is restricted space for the reception class children to take part in practical and play activities, and little use is made by them of a shared space between the rooms. There is no designated outside play area for children under five, and this restricts learning opportunities. The range of resources for practical and creative activities is restricted.

ENGLISH

95. **At the end of Key Stage 1, standards of attainment are broadly in line with the national average and pupils make generally satisfactory progress through the key stage. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards of attainment are above the national average, and pupils make good progress at the top of the key stage. Standards at the top of Key Stage 2 have risen since the last inspection.**

Key Stage 1

96. The school's scores in national tests for seven year olds in reading in 2000 were above the national average, whilst scores in writing were below average. Standards were in line with the average for similar schools in reading, and below that average in writing. Scores in reading were higher in the two previous years, whilst scores in writing were similar to the previous year, but below the 1998 scores. Standards in reading have always tended to be above those in writing. Inspection evidence suggests that standards will be similar this year.
97. Standards in speaking, listening and reading are higher than those in writing. By the age of seven, most pupils express themselves clearly and with some confidence, although opportunities for extended discussions are too limited for pupils to demonstrate attainment at the higher level (Level 3) where they understand main points and respond appropriately.
98. In reading, most pupils read appropriate texts with some fluency and understanding, and some have moved to the higher level of summing up main points and discussing preferences. There is a good focus on the teaching of reading, especially within the literacy hour, and there is good support from parents at home.
99. Standards in writing are generally average in terms of the number of pupils attaining the expected level (Level 2), but few pupils attain the higher level where writing is organised, imaginative and clear, and words are chosen for variety and interest. This is because there are too few opportunities for pupils to practice writing extended pieces independently, and they receive too little specific guidance on how to improve, beyond the correction of errors.

Key Stage 2

100. In national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000, the school's scores were above the national average, and in line with the average in similar schools. This was lower than the previous year but in line with the year before that. Inspection evidence suggests

that standards will remain above the national average this year and in line with the standards of schools with similar background.

101. As with Key Stage 1, standards in writing are not so high as those in reading, speaking and listening. Pupils are able to convey their opinions clearly and listen attentively, but in much discussion work pupils are confined to responding to the teacher rather than developing their own questions and ideas. This inhibits the development of the higher skills of responding to others' views.
102. Reading skills are well developed with most pupils reading fluently and with understanding. Pupils are able to refer to the text when explaining their views, and many have a good ability to analyse texts to understand what gives them their characteristic features. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils were able to recognise that it was the use of impersonal pronouns that distinguished some formal factual writing about railways from more conversational pieces.
103. Standards in writing are in line with the national average. By the age of eleven, most pupils are able to write competently with correct spellings, punctuation and grammar. Ideas are developed well through increasingly complex sentences. Some very effective feedback from their teacher enabled Year 6 pupils to use their good analysis of formal writing to adjust their writing to the formal style. Comparatively few pupils are yet attaining the higher level (Level 5) of writing where vocabulary choices are adventurous and words chosen for effect.

Attainment and progress of different groups

104. Pupils with special educational needs at both key stages receive appropriate support and make satisfactory progress towards targets set in individual education plans. The progress of higher and lower attaining pupils is generally in line with what would be expected, although very few pupils attain the higher level in writing at the end of Key Stage 1. Girls tend to attain higher than boys at the end of both key stages, but this is in line with the national trend.

The quality of teaching

105. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall at both key stages, with some good teaching at the top of Key Stage 2 where pupils make good progress through Year 6. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory when pupils were set very low level work that would not extend their skills.
106. The good teaching at the end of the key stage is well focused on the specific requirements of the national curriculum and builds well on what different groups of pupils have already attained. The focus on, and use of, impersonal pronouns, mentioned above, is a good example of this. In a good Year 3 literacy lesson there was a very effective focus on extracting information from what seemed a somewhat unpromising story about a fox. The pupils responded well to some good questioning from the teacher and were very sharp in distinguishing hard information from the story. It was possible to see some pupils who found this difficult at first becoming able to distinguish the information in the course of this lesson.
107. The teaching of writing has not produced standards as high as in other aspects of English or other subjects. There is a good focus on skills and aspects such as punctuation and spelling, but too few opportunities for pupils to engage in sustained independent writing where they can practice these skills and put the various elements together. Too few opportunities are created in subjects other than English for such sustained writing. There are also few opportunities for pupils to reflect upon what they have written in terms of its quality and clarity, or to make amendments that

would improve these. Pupils work very well together and could co-operate in such appraisal.

108. The Literacy Hour has been generally effectively introduced, except on some occasions in Year 5 where neither the structure nor content was followed. There is some opportunity for extended writing in other subjects, such as history, but most work in other subjects is confined to short accounts that do not offer sufficient scope to develop skills.
109. There is some effective use of information technology, particularly at Key Stage 2, with pupils writing directly on to screen and using word processing facilities to amend and correct their writing. Older pupils also make use of information technology for research purposes and are able to access and use information from encyclopaedia programs.

MATHEMATICS

110. **At the end of Key Stage 1, standards are in line with the national average. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above the national average, but in line with the average of similar schools. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school and good progress at the end of Key Stage 2. The standards are in line with those found by the last inspection.**

Key Stage 1

111. In national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000, standards of attainment were above average in terms of average point score. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected level (Level 2) was well above average, but the proportion attaining Level 3 was well below the national average. In comparison with similar schools, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 or above was higher than comparative schools but well below for pupils attaining Level 3 or above. Teacher assessments of pupils' attainment in the using and applying strand of mathematics were below the national average and well below for attainment at Level 3. These scores were higher than in the previous two years, but in line with scores in 1997.
112. Inspection evidence suggests that present standards are similar to those in the 2000 tests. By the age of seven, standards of attainment in number are above national expectations. Pupils are able to add single and two digit numbers correctly, and add up mentally in tens. They recognise odd and even numbers, understand simple multiplication, and have a working knowledge of multiplication facts. Attainments in shape, space and measure are in line with national expectations. Pupils calculate different combinations of coins to make given amounts of money, and accurately calculate simple totals and differences. Pupils recognise and name two-dimensional shapes. Pupils use their knowledge of number to investigate simple sequences and successfully apply addition and subtraction to extend them accurately.

Key Stage 2

113. In national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000, standards were well below the national average. This was much lower than in the previous year, when standards were above average, or in the three years before that, when standards were average. The low standards are associated with the presence in the class of an unusually high number of pupils with special educational needs. Evidence during the current inspection suggests that standards will be similar to levels in 1999 when they were above average.

114. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of place value and calculate mentally with good levels of accuracy. They explain their methods clearly and discuss efficient methods for calculation to improve their approaches. Pupils measure with satisfactory accuracy, have a sound knowledge of shapes and use an appropriate range of vocabulary to describe their properties. They use co-ordinates in all four quadrants and successfully map shapes rotated about the origin. They define precisely terminology concerned with symmetry translation and symmetry. Pupils construct graphs accurately and present them in a variety of ways. Their skills of interpretation are less well developed. In using and applying mathematics, pupils demonstrate confidence in their communication skills. They present explanations of products and multiples clearly when investigating properties of numbers. Pupils show good levels of reasoning and strategies in problem solving and investigations but have too few information resources to support the development of greater independence.
115. The skills pupils develop in numeracy are underused in other areas of the curriculum. There are too few opportunities to develop the use of graphical representations of information in science and geography. Mathematics and its applications in presenting and communicating information are under-represented in displays of work around the school and in pupils recorded work. There are examples of tabulated information that have not been extended and explored through graphical representation.

Quality of teaching and learning

116. The quality of teaching is sound overall, with good features in both key stages. The use of questioning to clarify and extend pupils' understanding is sensitive, but probing and persistent. Support materials are used effectively in some classes to improve the levels of interaction of pupils in large groups. Number fans were used well to assess individual responses and pick up on misunderstanding. Teachers provide effective visual prompts to encourage recall, or diagrammatic models to develop understanding. Overall, however, resources such as number fans, counting sticks, number lines and digit cards are underused in whole class sessions and the levels of involvement of pupils is reduced. Teachers' planning includes learning objectives, but often these are too general or too numerous to provide a sufficiently clear focus for supporting manageable assessment to inform future plans. The range of strategies for managing differentiated activities is too narrow, and opportunities for developing pupils' understanding through analysis of mistakes is difficult to manage where pupils cannot work with sufficient independence. As a consequence, some pupils are challenged at levels that are too high or too low. Pupils with special educational needs in mathematics are well supported by teaching assistants.
117. Lessons generally adopt the national numeracy recommended format, but the extended time of ninety minutes for some sessions results in a drop in the pupils' pace of work and levels of concentration. In a significant number of lessons, introductions are too long and insufficient time is left for pupils to follow up work individually or in groups. The extended teacher-directed element of the sessions reduces opportunities for pupils to develop at their own level and to take greater responsibility for the pace and direction of their own learning.
118. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good and this contributes positively to progress and learning. They show high levels of interest and good levels of perseverance in tackling their work. They make productive use of opportunities to discuss their methods and approaches in response to teacher direction, but too few activities are planned for pupils to collaborate in pairs or small groups. Pupils respond very positively to challenges and show determination and enthusiasm to solve problems.

They respond eagerly to teachers' questions which present challenges or lead them to examine the suitability of their answers.

119. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has raised pupils' attainments and experience in using and applying mathematics. This aspect of mathematics has improved since the last inspection, but is not consistently developed through the school.

SCIENCE

120. At the end of Key Stage 1, standards of attainment are in line with the national average. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are above the national average, but in line with the average for schools with similar backgrounds. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection.

Key Stage 1

121. There is no national test for seven year olds in science, but the teachers' own assessments in 2000 indicated that overall standards were in line with the national average, but below the average of similar schools. This was similar to previous years. Inspection evidence suggests that standards are very similar this year, with an average number of pupils attaining the expected level (Level 2), but comparatively few attaining the higher level (Level 3).
122. By the time they are seven years old, most pupils know about a range of physical phenomena such as light and sound, and are able to compare effects such as brightness or the production of sound. Few have moved to the higher level (Level 3) in making generalisations from their observations. Most are able to describe and sort materials by everyday criteria, but again, few use their knowledge and understanding to explain how materials affect the suitability of objects. In fact, many Year 2 pupils did not distinguish between the object and the material from which it was made.

Key Stage 2

123. In national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000, standards were well below the national average, and well below the average of similar schools. This was an unusually low set of scores, and was related to the presence in the class of a higher than usual number of pupils with special educational needs. Standards in previous years have been generally in line with the national average but below those of similar schools. Inspection evidence suggests that standards are higher this year, being above the national average, but in line with similar schools. Standards are higher in the knowledge-based elements of the subject (Attainment Targets 2-4) than in the investigative aspects (Attainment Target 1).
124. By the age of eleven, most pupils have a good knowledge of the life processes aspect of the subject, with Year 6 pupils able to describe the functions of major organs of the human body, and explain the relationship of living things to their habitats. In studying physical processes, Year 6 pupils have developed a good understanding of electrical circuits. In one good lesson, Year 6 pupils were able to devise ways of varying the flow of electricity through a circuit to affect the brightness of a bulb and the speed of a motor.
125. At both key stages, standards in the investigative aspects are not as high as in the other attainment targets. Most older pupils are able to make relevant observations and provide simple explanations, but they have had too few opportunities to put forward their own ideas of how to answer questions or to carry out a series of

observations and measurements using tables, bar charts or graphs. Very few are able to describe how to vary one factor whilst keeping others the same.

Teaching

126. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages, although there was one example of unsatisfactory teaching in Year 5 where the content of the lesson did not extend pupils' knowledge. In a good Year 1 lesson, pupils were enthused by the game of describing objects felt inside a bag, and good questioning by the teacher set a good model to pupils who were then able to ask their own questions about features of the objects. In a good Year 3 lesson, pupils were given good opportunities to discover and describe for themselves the effects of the different poles of magnets. There was some very good teaching in a Year 6 lesson, with a high level of challenge, a very sharp focus and pupils given scope to find out for themselves ways of varying current in a circuit.
127. The school has started to address the key issue raised by the last inspection report and is now giving more attention to the investigative aspect of the subject. However, this still needs to be further improved, with pupils given more independence in these investigations. There is insufficient focus on the actual requirements of Attainment Target 1, such as the tabulation of measurements and the controlling of variables.

ART

128. It was not possible to see sufficient art lessons during the inspection for any overall judgements to be made. There is a very small amount of art work on display and its quality is generally lower than that usually found for pupils of this age. The work in pupils' sketchbooks is also below the quality expected for this age. Pupils have developed a satisfactory knowledge of the work of famous artists, and by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know about the work of Monet, Van Gogh and William Morris, amongst others. This is enhanced by a visit to Birmingham's Art Gallery to see original works of art. Standards were judged to be satisfactory by the end of both key stages at the time of the last inspection.
129. Curriculum planning suggests that pupils cover the range of media and techniques required by the subject. However, evidence from the week of inspection indicates that the majority of art work is concentrated on observational drawing, and sketchbooks show very little progress or variety over the key stages.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

130. It was not possible to observe sufficient teaching of design and technology during the inspection, for any overall judgement to be made.
131. The policy and comprehensive scheme follow the national QCA guidance, and there have been some amendments in the planning and provision of resources to address issues concerning the range of work. The central resources have a very limited range of construction materials to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of different properties and their appropriate uses. The range of tools for cutting, shaping and finishing is very limited, and tools are not organised to facilitate access and use by pupils of different age groups.
132. In these respects, the response to the last inspection report's recommendation, to increase the emphasis on progression through a range of skills and improvements in

the accuracy of assessment to inform planning, has been insufficient to make the progress satisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

133. Only one geography lesson was observed during the inspection and therefore no overall judgement can be made.
134. In the one lesson seen, Year 2 pupils were able to describe the physical and human features of places by comparing their own locality with the fictional one in a “Katie Morag” story. The fictional nature of the comparison actually made this difficult, with some pupils saying that the locality in the story was different because “it was made up”. A visit to an actual contrasting locality would have deepened understanding in this activity. However, the pupils were able to demonstrate their ability to record and distinguish features such as transport, vegetation, hills and buildings.
135. Discussion with pupils, and a scrutiny of their work, suggests that attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is generally in line with that expected nationally. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a sound knowledge of differences in hot and cold climates and the effects of weather. They are able to talk about the differences in localities between Bloxwich and Llangollen in Wales. Pupils have an early understanding of environmental issues, for example, they can talk with confidence about the impact of litter on the environment. However, their understanding of wider issues is limited and mapping skills are underdeveloped. At the time of the last inspection, standards of attainment were judged to be in line with national expectations. The school has maintained standards since the last inspection.
136. The school makes use of the national Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) geography units as a basis for curriculum planning. However, although the school allocates only half the time to the teaching of geography that was envisaged by the QCA, it still attempts to cover all the programmes of study. This results in an unbalanced, and not altogether meaningful programme.

HISTORY

137. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards of attainment are generally in line with those usually found. It was not possible to see any history lessons at Key Stage 1, so no overall judgement can be made. At the time of the last inspection attainment in History was reported to be in line with national expectation at Key Stage 1 and above national expectation at Key Stage 2.
138. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a reasonable knowledge of periods in history they have studied, such as Celts, Romans, Greeks and Victorians. They are able to place these periods in a consecutive time line and talk about key events in the period. Few are able to identify the changes within or between periods, and are not yet aware of the changes and developments that took place within the sixty years of the Victorian period. This is because teaching has not focused sufficiently on this important requirement of the subject.
139. In two of the four lessons seen at Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory, one lesson was satisfactory and the other good. In one unsuccessful lesson, Year 3 pupils, not being taken by their class teacher, failed to pay sufficient attention and many were disruptive, partly because the lesson was repetitive and not

sufficiently interesting to hold their interest. The other unsuccessful lesson failed to challenge Year 5 pupils sufficiently. In the good lesson, Year 6 pupils were encouraged to behave like historians and make good use of secondary sources to aid their investigations, using photographs and books as evidence of Victorian schooling and way of life. Pupils make good progress in Year 6, and this brings standards up to average. Learning is enhanced by visits to a Roman Fort and museums to support pupils' work on the ancient Greeks.

140. As in geography, the school makes use of the national Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) history units as a basis for curriculum planning. Again the school attempts to cover all the units in half the time, and this results in an unbalanced, and not altogether meaningful, programme.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

141. **At the end of both key stages, standards of attainment are in line with those usually found. This is the same as the findings of the last inspection.**
142. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are able to use word processing skills to change text, insert punctuation and change connectives. They are also able to use a variety of software to support other curricular areas, for example maths games. Younger pupils are able to program a set of instructions to control a "roamer". Few pupils have attained the higher level (Level 3) of sharing and exchanging ideas, or using models or simulations to help them find things out and solve problems.
143. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can load, save and insert images, which they can increase or decrease in size and re-position in the text. They can also use a spell check, change font or print size, and use colour and print. Year 6 pupils are able to use a spreadsheet and devise the appropriate formula for given calculations. There has been little work on the measurement and control elements of the subject, and so attainment is lower in this area. There is no present opportunity in school for pupils to attain the higher level (Level 5) by using the internet to support learning and using of e-mail. However, many pupils use the internet at home to support their homework.
144. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good teaching at the top of Key Stage 2. All classes have timetabled lessons in the new computer suite and this is very helpful in the development of skills. Teachers are usually clear in their explanations and generally confident in their use of the technology. However, more use could be made of the inter-active whiteboard in the computer suite. Its use in demonstrations would make explanations easier to follow. In the good Year 6 lesson, there was a high degree of challenge with pupils being taught to use a spreadsheet to calculate the area and perimeter of rectangles. Aided by some skilful questioning by the teacher, pupils were given the opportunity to discover the formula, and this enhanced their understanding.
145. The allocation of time to lessons in the computer suite is not always appropriate. Some lessons, such as the Year 6 spreadsheet lesson, have good pace and high challenge, whilst others last far longer than the content demands. For instance, a Year 4 lesson on the use of the spellcheck lasted almost an hour and a half, even though most pupils were very confident with the procedures soon after the lesson started.
146. Whole school planning for ICT development is comprehensive. However, the amount of time allocated to the teaching of the ICT curriculum, and how the teaching

focuses on the development of skills in a progressive and continuous way, has not yet been addressed by the school.

MUSIC

147. At the end of both key stages, standards of attainment are in line with those usually found. This is in line with the findings of the last inspection.
148. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils develop the quality of their singing and listen effectively to the singing of the teacher to improve their own performance significantly. They identify and clap in time to different rhythms in poetry and respond accurately in representing rhythms in music. Older pupils in the key stage listen to different pieces of music and successfully identify different rhythms and sounds. They use a good range of musical terms. Pupils use percussion instruments to contribute to a whole class performance reflecting different stages and moods in a piece of music related to a story.
149. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils successfully maintain their own part in singing a round. They respond effectively to teacher directions on control of breathing and control of pitch. They recognise how this improves their ability to sustain notes and further improve the standard of their performance through listening to the teacher's singing. Pupils satisfactorily read and interpret a musical score showing parts for different instruments and using conventional scale and musical notation. They use a variety of percussion instruments and recorders to play their specific part of the score and practice in small groups. Pupils were able to perform the piece satisfactorily, as a whole group.
150. All music lessons seen were taken by a recently appointed specialist teacher. The expertise of the teacher significantly raises the attainments and performance of pupils, and the quality of teaching is good. Resources and time are well managed, although opportunities to involve pupils in choosing appropriate instruments for particular effects are underdeveloped. The planning is comprehensive, but provision for pupils to evaluate each other's work constructively and seek ways to improve are limited. The provision of peripatetic teacher support for instrumental tuition and the involvement of pupils in the school choir contribute well to the performance of music in the school, and significantly enhance the progress of the individual pupils involved.
151. Pupils respond with great enthusiasm to music. They are eager to participate and are confident to make their responses in groups and as individuals. They respond well to the examples provided by the teacher, and are motivated to greater efforts when praised for their efforts and through enjoyment of the products of their own singing and performance.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

152. Standards of attainment are broadly in line with those usually found at the end of each key stage. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection.
153. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils show sound levels of control and co-ordination of their movements. They respond quickly and interpret accurately a range of oral prompts, and demonstrate basic safety awareness when working in large groups during warm up activities. They stop and start movements safely and find spaces effectively. Younger pupils show satisfactory skills of throwing and catching. Pupils

listen carefully to percussion instruments, using appropriate vocabulary to describe contrasts in the sounds produced. They successfully interpret these sounds in simple floor movements, and satisfactorily demonstrate corresponding contrasts in their movements. Pupils have opportunities to observe other groups and individuals working, but these are insufficiently used to evaluate specific techniques and actions to improve their own work.

154. It was possible to observe only a very small number of lessons in Key Stage 2. In these lessons, standards of attainment were in line with those usually found. Pupils practice and develop skills in ball control using hockey sticks. They make satisfactory improvements in their skills and show awareness of basic techniques. Younger pupils demonstrate a satisfactory range of floor movements related to specific vocabulary. They use their knowledge to devise ways of representing high and low, as well as fast and slow, movements. Although they take time to observe each other working, this is insufficiently used to develop coaching points and evaluate and improve their own performance. Participation in extra-curricular sessions of a variety of games successfully enhances their skills and understanding of basic tactics and co-operative teamwork. All older pupils have the opportunity to participate in athletics and outdoor adventurous activities.
155. The quality of teaching in lessons seen was generally satisfactory. In some sessions, the balance between listening and physical activity did not provide sufficient opportunities for active involvement. There was little evidence of significant progress in addressing issues raised with regard to the use of individual assessment to secure progression. Staff had found involvement in the 'TOPs' programme had increased their confidence in teaching physical education, and further sessions are planned.