

## **INSPECTION REPORT**

### **HOB GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Stourbridge

LEA area: Dudley

Unique reference number: 103833

Headteacher: Mrs E Roberts

Reporting inspector: Mrs P C Cox  
19178

Dates of inspection: 11 – 14 September 2000

Inspection number: 225236

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant, Junior and Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hob Green Road Pedmore Fields Stourbridge West Midlands
Postcode:	DY9 9EX
Telephone number:	01384 816730
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs D Calder
Date of previous inspection:	2 March 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs P C Cox 19178	Registered Inspector	Information technology Religious education Design and technology	Standards Teaching .
Mrs S Burgess 12289	Lay Inspector		Attitudes and behaviour Care for pupils Links with parents Links with the community Extra-curricular activities Accommodation and learning resources
Mr R Linstead 19041	Team Inspector	English Geography History	Efficiency Staffing
Mr M Wainwright 11528	Team Inspector	Science Art Physical education	Curriculum Assessment Special educational needs
Mrs K Campbell 22856	Team Inspector	Mathematics Music	The under-fives Equal opportunities Leadership and management
Mr W Gale 21317	Team Inspector		The individual needs centre

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Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hob Green Primary School is situated in Stourbridge on the edge of the West Midlands conurbation. There are 263 full-time pupils in the school with 60 part-time children in the nursery. This total includes 10 pupils in the school's Individual Needs Centre. Almost all pupils are of white ethnic heritage and have English as their first language. Eighty-four pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average and reflects the circumstances of the immediate area. Thirty-two per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, of whom 11 have statements of special educational need. These proportions are also above average. Pupils' attainment when they start school is generally below average in language skills, although in mathematics it is close to the average.

The school has recently become part of an Education Action Zone and has gained the Investors in People Award.

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

This is an effective school. Standards are satisfactory in most subjects and pupils make satisfactory progress through the school. Leadership is strong and management is satisfactory overall. Teaching is satisfactory and pupils behave well.

The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils make good progress in science throughout the school and their attainment is above average.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership.
- Provision for moral development is very good and pupils behave well.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are very good.
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs in the main school and for those in the Individual Needs Centre is good.

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

- Attainment is below average in English, religious education, design and technology and music at both key stages and in information and communication technology at Key Stage 2
- Many subject co-ordinators are not involved enough in improving standards in their subjects.
- The school does not use the wider community well enough to support pupils' learning.
- Insufficient attention is given to multicultural education.

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

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

When the school was inspected in March 1998 it was found to have serious weaknesses in standards, teaching and management. This is no longer the case. The school has made good progress in addressing the weaknesses in the two years since the present headteacher was appointed. Standards have risen in most subjects, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. At the time of the previous inspection standards were well below average in English. Although the oldest pupils are not yet at the required level in information and communication technology, they are now making satisfactory progress.

The quality of teaching has improved and almost half is now good, although there are still weaknesses in a few classes. Teachers plan carefully to meet the needs of all pupils. The school now has strong leadership and management is satisfactory. The governing body has developed its role to a sound level and complies with all statutory requirements. Because the staff are enthusiastic and work well as a team the school has good potential for further improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests in 1999.

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

**Key**

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

The results of the Key Stage 2 national tests in 1999 were above the national average in science but below average in mathematics and well below in English. Compared with those in schools with similar levels of free school meals standards were average in mathematics and well above average in science, but below average in English. Test results have been rising steadily in the past four years and have risen faster than the national trend. The findings of the inspection confirm the 2000 test results; standards are close to the average in mathematics, those in science are higher, while in English they are still below average. Progress is satisfactory and in science it is good.

The results of the Key Stage 1 tests in 1999 were below national average in reading, but above average in writing and well above in mathematics. In comparison with those in similar schools standards were average in reading, but in writing they were well above average and in mathematics very high. The results in 2000 were lower in all three subjects. Until then results had generally been rising. The findings of the inspection reflect the most recent test results; standards are average in reading and mathematics, and in writing they are below average. Pupils are making satisfactory progress and in science they are doing well.

In most other subjects pupils are reaching levels that are similar to pupils in other schools. Progress in information and communication technology is satisfactory and standards are similar to other schools at Key Stage 1, but at Key Stage 2 they are lower because pupils have a lot of ground to make up. Pupils are not doing as well as they should in religious education, design and technology and music. Children enter the school with attainment that is below average for their age in language and communication skills and average in mathematical knowledge. They make satisfactory progress in the nursery and reception class.

The school has set demanding but achievable targets for improvement.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy school and take part in lessons willingly.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour tends to improve as pupils get older because of the consistent way in which staff promote it. The oldest pupils behave commendably.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils form good relationships with each other and with adults. Their personal development is satisfactory.
Attendance	Below average. In spite of the great efforts made by the school not all parents recognise the importance of regular and punctual 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.*

Teaching is satisfactory overall throughout the whole school. It is good and occasionally very good in 43 per cent of lessons. Teaching is unsatisfactory in seven per cent of lessons.

At both key stages teaching is good and occasionally very good in 47 per cent of lessons. Most of the very good teaching takes place at Key Stage 2. Teaching is good in Year 6 and Year 1 and there is a significant proportion of good and very good teaching in Year 3 and in one class in Year 5. However, the majority of the unsatisfactory teaching is also at Key Stage 2: almost all of the unsatisfactory teaching occurs in one class in each of Years 4 and 5.

Teaching of English is good at both key stages and the skills of literacy are soundly taught throughout the school. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory overall; it is good and often very good in over half of lessons but unsatisfactory in a significant minority. The skills of numeracy are taught well. The teachers who are new to the school generally contribute well to the quality of teaching.

Teaching is good in the pre-nursery and satisfactory in the nursery. Overall it is satisfactory in the reception class, but there is a significant minority of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory.

The teaching at this school is characterised by the teachers' enthusiasm; this is particularly the case when the teaching is good. Lessons move rapidly and teachers build carefully on pupils' skills and knowledge, making their lessons very interesting. When the teaching is unsatisfactory it is because the work is not matched to pupils' attainment; sometimes it is too difficult while in other lessons the work does not cater for the range of ability in the class.

The support staff make a positive contribution to the work of the school because they are prepared well for their role and work with enthusiasm and commitment.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is planned carefully and the timetable is structured well to make the best use of time.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils receive a good level of support and are able to play a full part in all lessons. They make good progress at Key Stage 2.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for moral development is very good, for social development it is good and for spiritual and cultural development it is satisfactory. However, there is not enough emphasis on multicultural education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school has effective systems for supporting pupils and caring for them. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress and for promoting attendance and good behaviour are particularly strong.

The school works hard to establish and extend the partnership with parents, with a limited response as yet, although parents have a high regard for the school.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership for the school and have successfully promoted higher standards. However, the subject co-ordinators do not all take sufficient responsibility for improving standards in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors undertake their role with understanding and are involved fully in moving the school forward.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Senior staff know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and take effective action to improve where necessary.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school's resources are used well to support its priorities for development.

The school is well staffed and the accommodation is good. Resources are at least satisfactory in all subjects and are very good in information and communication technology.

Senior staff and governors are aware of how the school compares with others and look carefully for good value when monitoring major spending decisions.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teaching is good and their children make good progress.</li> <li>• Pupils behave well and the school helps them to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school is led and managed well and parents feel able to ask questions and discuss problems.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents and they feel welcome.</li> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• The school has improved considerably since the last inspection.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few parents feel they would like more information about their children's progress.</li> <li>• A similar proportion were not happy with the amount of homework.</li> <li>• A significant minority were not satisfied with the amount of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

Ten parents attended the pre-inspection meeting with inspectors and 115 returned questionnaires. The findings of the inspection support the positive comments they made. The school has many strengths and has improved well recently.

Inspectors found little to support parents' criticisms. Parents have an appropriate amount of information about their children's progress and pupils receive a similar amount of homework to that given in other schools. The school provides a very good level of extra-curricular activities.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The National Curriculum tests in 1999 at Key Stage 2 show that pupils were attaining levels that were well below the national average in English, below average in mathematics, but above average in science. Compared with those in schools with similar levels of entitlement to free school meals, standards were below average in English, in mathematics close to the average and in science well above average. Standards have been rising since 1996 and have improved since the last inspection, particularly in science. This improvement has been more pronounced than the national improvement.
2. The findings of the inspection indicate that standards are still above average in science, average in mathematics, but below average in English for the pupils currently in Year 6. This is reflected in the results of the 2000 test results, which are better than those in previous years. The proportion attaining the higher Level 5 in all three subjects is greater than it was in 1999. The school set appropriate targets for improvement in English and mathematics this year and exceeded the target in both subjects. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in both and they achieve well in science.
3. At Key Stage 1 the results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests show a level of attainment below the national average in reading, above in writing and in mathematics similar to the national average. Compared with the results of similar schools standards were close to the average in reading, well above in writing and very high in mathematics. The test results were much higher than in the previous three years when they were well below average. The teachers' assessments in science indicate that pupils' attainment was above average.
4. The findings of the inspection indicate that the attainment of pupils presently in Year 2, in comparison with the results in the 1999 tests, is higher in reading, similar in mathematics, but lower in writing. This is reflected in the results of the 2000 tests. In science standards are above average. Pupils make good progress in science and their progress in mathematics and English is satisfactory. Overall, standards have risen since the previous inspection, but not as well as at Key Stage 2.
5. Most children enter the nursery with little knowledge of books and many have poorly developed speaking and listening skills. Some are unable to answer questions in more than single words and others with speech problems have difficulty making themselves understood. Most children develop secure mathematical, creative, physical and social skills. However, despite the steady progress made by children of all abilities in the nursery their communication, language and literacy skills remain below average by the time they move into the reception class. These findings are confirmed by the school's initial assessments of children starting school.
6. In English at Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is below average. They listen with reasonable understanding to each other and their teachers, but few speak at length or with a rich vocabulary. Pupils' reading skills are average. Most read with some fluency and accuracy and use a variety of strategies to identify unknown words. Standards in writing are below average. Pupils write very simple stories, poems and factual accounts, but their punctuation and spelling are not accurate enough. They make satisfactory progress in all areas, but their knowledge and use of language are not developed in a sufficiently structured way.

7. Pupils attain average standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1. They understand patterns in number and apply their knowledge to solving problems. They recognise two-dimensional shapes and use data-handling skills to produce block graphs. Almost all pupils are secure with numbers to 100. They make satisfactory progress through the key stage, although there is occasional unsatisfactory teaching that does not promote pupils' understanding well enough.
8. In science at the end of the key stage pupils carry out investigations and make predictions about their results. Their understanding of the properties of materials is good and their knowledge of plants and animals is very good. Pupils' knowledge of sound and electricity is well developed and they make a good contribution to the experiments they undertake. Pupils make good progress because they are taught well.
9. At the end of Key Stage 2 in English pupils' attainment is still below average in speaking and listening. They listen carefully and some try to answer in detail. However, their vocabulary is still limited and few contribute more than a few words. Reading standards are average. Most pupils recognise the main themes of books and understand how language is used to create an atmosphere. However, their understanding of the texts they read is often superficial and few use reference books for research in other subjects. Most pupils are able to write a simple, structured story or account, with basic sentence structure. However, few write at any length and standards of spelling, presentation and punctuation are lower than they should be.
10. In mathematics at this key stage standards are average. Pupils have a sound grasp of numbers and calculate competently. Their standards are satisfactory in almost all areas of mathematics, although they are not so secure in using their knowledge to solve problems.
11. In science pupils reach above average standards. They conduct experiments and understand well how to make them fair. They develop the ability to design and conduct their own experiments well, predicting and recording carefully. Their knowledge of physical processes, forces and materials is strong.
12. At Key Stage 2 progress is satisfactory in English and mathematics and good in science, but this masks a variation through the key stage. Progress is better in some classes than in others because the teaching that pupils receive differs in quality. It is good in Year 6 and some classes in other year groups. This is because lessons proceed at a very rapid pace, are based well on what pupils know and understand and challenge and stimulate them.
13. In information and communication technology pupils are making sound progress and they reach the expected levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. However, they have not reached high enough standards at the end of Key Stage 2 because their previous experience has not prepared them adequately. Their skills in modelling and control are below average and their keyboard skills are poor.
14. Pupils make good progress in developing their numeracy skills throughout the school and the development of literacy skills is satisfactory overall. The literacy strategy has been implemented effectively and the numeracy strategy is being used well. However, there is not a consistent emphasis on developing and extending pupils' language skills in other subjects. While teachers emphasise correct language they miss many opportunities to develop speech and to employ a range of writing styles and techniques through the broad curriculum.

15. In most other subjects through both key stages pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve similar standards to pupils in other schools. However, they do not make enough progress in religious education, music and design and technology at both key stages because they are given too few structured opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge. Consequently, standards are not high enough.
16. Pupils with special educational needs receive work that is matched appropriately to their abilities and make at least satisfactory progress in lessons. Their individual education plans are focused appropriately on their specific needs and support teachers in planning appropriate work for them. Progress at Key Stage 2 is good because the support these pupils receive is well designed. In addition, the setting of older pupils by attainment for literacy and numeracy sessions is proving successful. The good quality of lesson planning has ensured that teachers usually cater appropriately for the more able pupils. These pupils generally make progress comparable with others in their class and reach suitable levels of attainment.
17. Since the previous inspection standards have risen in English, mathematics, science, art and design and information and communication technology, particularly at Key Stage 2. However, standards have fallen in religious education and geography, and in design and technology and music they have not improved. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress in raising standards and has set realistic but challenging targets for improvement, based on previous attainment, for future years.

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

18. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, especially in Key Stage 2. Where management of pupils is strongest, their behaviour is often very good. Pupils are interested in their work and generally sustain their concentration during lessons. Without adult help, however, a few pupils sometimes find it difficult to settle to their work or to persevere if there are problems. Pupils are supportive of each other when working in groups or pairs. For instance, pupils in Year 4 much enjoyed measuring the circumference of each other's skulls in science, those in Year 1 shared art resources very sensibly and pupils in all years co-operated well in pairs when using computers during information and communication technology lessons.
19. The pupils who have special educational needs behave well; those with behaviour difficulties do not stand out in lessons or around school. In sets for English and mathematics the lower attainers often work harder and show more enthusiasm; they are keen to learn
20. Older pupils particularly are happy to talk about themselves and their work. They are courteous and welcoming to visitors. Relationships between pupils and staff and between pupils themselves are good. There was spontaneous applause for right answers during a mathematics lesson. Pupils listen quietly to others' ideas in personal and social education lessons, taking turns sensibly during discussions.
21. Standards of behaviour have improved since the last inspection. Behaviour in class, in assemblies and around the school is generally good. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting with inspectors felt that since the appointment of the present headteacher an atmosphere of mutual respect has developed. Lunchtimes are relaxed and sociable with orderly queues in the hall. Some parents were concerned about the handling of incidents in the dinner hall, but no problems were observed during inspection week and pupils are happy with the way supervisors manage them.

22. Pupils consider others in their movement around the school, generally walking in a quiet, sensible way and holding doors open for those following. Pupils play amicably together at break times and clearly enjoy the large amount of space available outside. There were no exclusions last year.
23. Attendance, at 92.6 per cent, is lower than the national average. Despite the school's recent efforts there has been no improvement in attendance since the time of the last inspection. The attendance rate would be higher if fewer parents took their children out of school for holidays during term time and if more appreciated fully the importance of punctuality and regular attendance to their child's success at school.
24. Personal development is satisfactory, enhanced by the increased responsibility that pupils take as they progress through the school. Even the youngest return registers to the office and help to tidy their classroom. Older pupils help younger ones with reading and in the playground, arrange the hall for assemblies and tidy the library. Year 6 prefects and house captains also have a range of duties. The establishment of a school council is planned in the near future.
25. The personal and social development of children under five is good. The nursery and reception classes provide secure learning environments that encourage children to grow in confidence. Relationships between adults and children are strong and children enjoy coming to nursery and school. Children new to the nursery settle quickly into routines and they are encouraged to become independent from an early age.
26. There is good support for chosen charities such as National Children's Homes and Blue Peter appeals. Pupils enjoy all the extra-curricular activities that the school offers such as choir, country dancing, information and communication technology, football and netball. Pupils' personal and social development is not supported sufficiently through educational visits and visitors.

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

27. Throughout the school teaching is at least sound in 93 per cent of lessons. It is good and occasionally very good in 47 per cent. It is unsatisfactory in seven per cent. The school has made good progress in improving the quality of teaching at both key stages, particularly Key Stage 2, since the previous inspection when the high level of unsatisfactory teaching was a serious weakness.
28. Teaching in the early years is satisfactory in most lessons, although it is unsatisfactory in 12 per cent. All the unsatisfactory teaching takes place in the reception class. The quality of teaching for children in the pre-nursery group is good. Staff provide a warm and supportive atmosphere. Books, puzzles and games are used thoughtfully to create interest and build confidence. Teaching in the nursery class is always satisfactory. Both teaching and support staff work closely together to ensure that activities are structured well so that they can spend time with individual children on their first day in the nursery. Children's work is displayed attractively and working areas are organised well. There is a good balance of free choice and teacher-assisted activities. However, some activities lack a clear sense of purpose and do not always match the needs of the most able children or those who have already spent time in the nursery in the last academic year.
29. Although teaching in the reception class is satisfactory in the majority of lessons, it is unsatisfactory in a significant minority. Planning is usually satisfactory, group work is well organised and support staff provide a high level of good-quality support. However, the pace and timing of lessons are sometimes a problem. In addition, when activities are occasionally too hard or too easy children quickly get restless and class control becomes

increasingly difficult. There is satisfactory liaison between nursery and reception staff. Planning for both age groups is thorough and all staff have worked hard to prepare themselves well for the introduction of the foundation stage this term.

30. At both key stages teaching is good in almost a half of lessons and occasionally very good. It is occasionally unsatisfactory at Key Stage 1. The teaching is good for the youngest pupils at Key Stage 1 and is very good in almost a fifth of lessons. At Key Stage 2 teaching is consistently at least satisfactory in Years 3 and 6; it is good in almost half of lessons in Year 3 and in three-quarters in Year 6. The two teachers in Year 6 work very well together and this strength makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning. The situation is more patchy in Years 4 and 5; in both years the teaching in one class is often good and sometimes very good. By contrast teaching in the other class in both years is unsatisfactory in a significant minority of lessons. In general the newly-appointed teachers make a very positive contribution to the quality of teaching at both key stages.
31. Lesson planning is good throughout the school and is effective at Key Stage 1, where the teachers plan their work together to ensure consistency. Teachers are aware of the attainment and progress of their pupils in English, mathematics and science and use this knowledge to plan further work. They are usually precise about what they want their pupils to learn and share this with the pupils. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that work is matched to pupils' attainment and the more able pupils have appropriately challenging work set for them. Most lessons have a very clear structure, with regular opportunities for pupils to learn through practical work. There are good relationships and high standards of discipline in most classes.
32. Teachers manage pupils well in almost all lessons and this feature of the school is very strong at Key Stage 2. A good atmosphere is established in the classrooms and pupils are encouraged from an early age to adopt positive attitudes to learning. Teaching of the mixed-age class is satisfactory overall. However, occasionally the activities used do not develop the skills and knowledge of the older pupils well enough. At both key stages teachers have sound knowledge of most subjects, but knowledge of religious education and music is not secure and there is some confusion between art and design and technology. The resources are used effectively and the timetabling arrangements are very efficient, ensuring that time is not wasted during the school day.
33. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Class teachers are fully involved in writing their individual educational plans and so have a clear awareness of needs and cater well for them. There are good examples of planning for different levels of attainment in most lessons and support staff are almost always used well to support their designated pupils.
34. Enthusiasm is a particular characteristic of the staff at Hob Green and when the teaching is most effective teachers carry pupils along with their own energy and enjoyment. In addition, they plan their lessons very carefully to ensure that work is matched well to all levels of attainment. There is a strong rapport with pupils and humour is used well to encourage and give confidence in making a contribution. Teachers use resources imaginatively and constantly develop pupils' thinking skills through focused use of questions. The level of work set and positive use of control strategies reflect high expectations of achievement and behaviour. Lessons move briskly and teachers monitor their classrooms well, aware of progress and concentration, adjusting the pace of the lesson to the pace of learning.
35. These features were evident in a very successful literacy lesson in Year 5 aimed at developing pupils' ability to write descriptive prose. Many were reluctant to answer at

first, but the teacher's enthusiasm and probing questions provoked an increasingly eager response. By careful monitoring she involved all pupils in the discussion and ensured that all understood before moving on to the activity. These tasks were interesting, maintaining the level of enthusiasm, and pupils received the support they needed to enable them to do their best. The teacher used praise well and through sharing of vocabulary and ideas developed pupils' use of language appreciably.

36. When teaching is unsatisfactory teachers are not sufficiently aware of the level at which pupils are working and therefore set them inappropriate tasks. Occasionally, the teacher does not have sufficient knowledge of the subject and in other lessons the pace is too slow and pupils do not learn rapidly enough.
37. Literacy is promoted soundly throughout the school. Teaching is always at least satisfactory in English and is good and occasionally very good in just over half of lessons. The National Literacy Project has been implemented effectively and teachers are using it well. Literacy is developed appropriately through some other subjects of the curriculum, but not enough. In religious education, for example, opportunities are missed to develop these skills because worksheets and copying from the board are used too often. The wider skills in English, particularly in speaking and listening, are not developed systematically enough and this has a negative effect on pupils' overall progress in language development.
38. Numeracy is generally promoted well. In mathematics teaching is good in six out of ten lessons and is very good in almost a quarter and this high proportion of good teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, teaching is unsatisfactory in a sixth of lessons, mainly in one class in Year 5. The National Numeracy Project is generally being used effectively in almost all classes; when teaching is unsatisfactory the work is not matched well enough to the attainment of pupils, being too difficult for some and not demanding enough for others. Some work in science and geography enables pupils to develop skills in numeracy through measurement and calculation, but again opportunities are missed, particularly in design and technology. Information and communication technology is used appropriately in English and mathematics for drafting and redrafting work and for activities in data handling. However, opportunities are missed to use the computers as an integral part of the lesson in other subjects. Teaching is good in a half of lessons in science and this strength promotes good progress in the subject.
39. Support staff are generally deployed well to support specific groups of pupils and to assess responses during discussions, but this is not always the case. Overall, they make a good contribution to the work of the school.
40. Marking is generally undertaken regularly and accurately. Teachers make supportive and encouraging comments, but rarely use their marking to evaluate learning or to set further targets for pupils' attainment. Through both key stages a suitable amount of homework is set regularly.

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

41. The curriculum for both key stages provides pupils with a broad education that includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education throughout the year. The school meets statutory requirements fully and has suitable provision for sex education and drugs awareness. Overall, planning is good. Most schemes of work have been planned with care and teachers collaborate well to ensure that weekly and daily plans cover topics thoroughly. However, the schemes for religious education and design and technology do not give teachers enough support in planning their lessons. Provision in

class lessons for pupils with special educational needs is good, with well-matched tasks and strong support from adults. As these pupils are taught in mainstream, with no withdrawal, they are full members of the class. Strategies for the teaching of literacy skills are satisfactory. The school is well aware of the need to improve in this area and puts a strong emphasis on it. Strategies for the teaching of numeracy skills are good and these make a particular impact in mental mathematics sessions.

42. Curriculum provision for foundation stage children in both nursery and reception classes is matched well to the six areas of learning for this age group. Children are provided with adequate opportunities to develop through selecting activities independently, exploring and investigating. However, children enter the nursery with poorly-developed language skills; the current curriculum does not provide enough structure to ensure that children will have developed their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills sufficiently by the time they reach Year 1.
43. All pupils, including those with physical disabilities, have full and equal access to the curriculum. Regular homework is provided in each year group. Specific time is allocated weekly in each class for personal, social and health education. However, these are recent initiatives that are yet to make an impact. The school has very good provision for extra-curricular activities; the teachers make a wide range of additional opportunities available. The school has links with a number of similar primary schools, with the benefit of shared experience. Links with secondary schools are satisfactory, but the school recognises that they could be strengthened. Overall there has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection and parents' views support this.
44. Since the last inspection, however, there has been no significant expansion of the school's educational links with either the immediate or wider community. There are few links with the local churches, but a visiting evangelist takes assembly once a term. With the exception of practical and financial help from a supermarket chain with the school's pebble garden and the Centre's association with an electrical shop, business links are restricted to occasional donations of useful items such as pens and calculators.
45. Pupils participate in competitive sport against other schools and swimming lessons are arranged in Halesowen. There is a strong link with a local football club and the school has benefited from training provided by the club. The choir recently took part in a local music festival. Although there are no local playgroups, the Early Learning Group on school premises provides a gentle introduction to school life. Visits are arranged to and from The Grange secondary school for Years 5 and 6, preparing pupils for the next stage of their education. Exploration of Internet links to widen pupils' horizons is at an early stage of development, but there are suitable plans to exchange information with other local schools by e-mail and video-conferencing.
46. Recent educational visits have included trips to the Black Country Museum, Faith City, local country parks and the Millennium Dome. A week's residential stay is arranged for Year 4 at Astley Burf Outdoor Centre and Years 5 and 6 have an activity weekend at the Kingswood Centre. In general, however, the school does not make good use of its location in a very interesting area. The school does not use a wide enough range of visitors into school to support the curriculum.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

47. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. There is an assembly each day, prayers are said and responded to and there is a quiet atmosphere, but time is rarely given for reflection. Some teachers provide opportunities for reflection and development of spiritual values in lessons, but this is not a common feature. There are a few good



examples; in a Key Stage 1 dance lesson pupils listened to rain music, reflected on it and tried to match their movements. Pupils in Year 5 responded with some wonder at the paintings of famous artists shown by the teacher. In a Year 6 religious education lesson pupils listened thoughtfully to music chosen by others and responded with respect to the words. However, this is not a characteristic of much of the teaching of religious education.

48. Provision for moral development is very good. Teachers' expectations of behaviour and relationships are high and very evident. Pupils' behaviour consequently reflects this. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Discipline is firm but sensitive. There is an effective policy for behaviour so that the majority of pupils behave well in and around the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
49. Many opportunities are provided for social development and this is good. In lessons there are frequent opportunities to share both materials and ideas. Pupils in Year 6 work productively in threes when expected to plan their next science investigation. In games lessons pupils are tasked to play in small-sided games of football and hockey, refereeing themselves. Some pupils in Year 6 assist Key Stage 1 pupils during dinnertime play. An opportunity is given for shared living on a residential visit, which has a positive impact on pupils' social skills.
50. The school promotes some areas of cultural development well and overall provision is satisfactory. Pupils are taught effectively about the work of famous artists and can talk freely about them. Opportunities are given for pupils, including those with special educational needs, to learn to play musical instruments and a choir has been formed recently. However, music still has a low profile in the school. Insufficient attention is given to developing pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures and faiths. This is acknowledged by the school and is an area for development.

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

51. The headteacher and all staff provide a safe and caring environment. A number of improvements have been made since the last inspection. Registers are now kept centrally rather than in classrooms and there is now rigorous daily monitoring of attendance and punctuality. This has not as yet resulted in fewer absences, but the number of unauthorised absences has fallen rapidly. A learning-link worker, funded by the Dudley Partnership for Achievement Education Action Zone, had the responsibility for this monitoring last term. As patterns of absence emerge her services will enable appropriate action to be taken to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality. These are also promoted frequently in letters to parents and in assemblies.
52. Pupils are supervised well throughout the day. When practical help is needed; for instance, if pupils are unwell and require first aid, it is given calmly and quickly. Parents are always informed if there is any cause for concern. Throughout the school child protection arrangements are organised well, with training planned for the new staff so that all are up to date. Since the last inspection the recording of health and safety concerns, including fire drills, has been formalised, with an independent surveyor conducting termly site visits. The unsafe glass ceiling to the Key Stage 2 corridor has been replaced and security arrangements improved.
53. The school has very effective measures to promote good behaviour. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting commented favourably on this aspect of the school's work. They feel that, since the appointment of the present headteacher there is a fairer and more consistent approach towards promoting good behaviour. They appreciate the fact that

they are invited to work in partnership with the school to resolve problems and they are confident that the school deals with any bullying promptly and effectively.

54. The school has introduced a wide range of strategies for monitoring and assessing pupils' academic progress. This provision is very good. National tests for Years 2 and 6 are completed in accord with statutory requirements. Similar voluntary tests are carried out throughout Key Stage 2. In addition, assessments are made of pupils' basic attainment twice each year, with further tests of their learning in literacy and numeracy half-termly and at the end of science topics. The information obtained is analysed thoroughly so that pupils' progress is monitored and further targets set. The deputy headteacher has worked very well to produce the systems and carry out analyses alongside co-ordinators. Teachers are using these assessments satisfactorily to plan their work and are increasing their use of assessment throughout the curriculum.
55. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and there are close links with the appropriate agencies and therapists. There is a strong commitment to these pupils, who are identified as early as possible, from the nursery onwards. Each one has an appropriate education plan so that teachers are fully aware of and plan for their needs. The pupils' progress towards their personal targets is monitored regularly and any necessary adjustments made.

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

56. In general parents are very supportive of the work of the school and they are pleased that standards are improving. Since the current headteacher's appointment they feel more welcome in school and that their involvement is valued. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
57. The school is committed to establishing a closer partnership with parents and works hard to encourage their involvement. As at the time of the last inspection, however, the response to these efforts is sometimes disappointing. No parents, for instance, came to the governors' annual meeting with parents, more than 10 per cent did not return the home/school agreement and 15 per cent do not attend consultation evenings with their child's teacher. Not all children have someone at home who will hear them read or help with homework topics. However, there is good support for events such as school productions, special assemblies and sports day.
58. Only four parents are active members of the Parent Teacher Association, although the organised events are well supported. Over £5000 was donated to school last year for such items as toys for the Early Learning Group, netball kit and books. A few parents help in class and several more do so in various practical ways through the Helping Hands group that meets every week. There is a good response from parents of nursery, reception and Year 1 children to opportunities to take part in the annual START and SHARE projects to support their children's learning. The local Sports Link has awarded the school a grant to train parents as basketball referees.
59. Both the quality and quantity of information for parents are good. Consultation evenings are held each term with an opportunity to discuss the annual written reports in the summer term. These describe pupils' attainment and progress clearly and include targets for future improvement. The quality of annual reports has improved since the last inspection and parents now feel that reports and the monthly newsletters are helpful and informative. Information about the curriculum is sent out at the beginning of each term for all year groups, including the nursery. There are also suitable opportunities for the informal exchange of information at the beginning and end of the school day. The school has a suitable link with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils are

identified at an early stage and parents are kept closely informed. There are regular consultations at the reviews of pupils' progress.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

60. The leadership and management of the school are far more effective now than at the time of the last inspection. Parents acknowledge the appointment of a new headteacher as the key factor in the school's improvement. A major strength of the leadership is the way in which the headteacher, staff and governors have a shared sense of purpose, a consistent approach and a strong commitment to making things better for the pupils. The deputy headteacher, who has been in post for a year, is starting to establish herself within the school and her role in monitoring and assessing attainment is both effective and impressive. The management structure has been strengthened by the appointment of two key stage co-ordinators.
61. However, the role of subject co-ordinators is not yet sufficiently developed. Many are new to their posts and some have not yet acquired enough expertise to influence standards. They take some responsibility by monitoring planning, auditing resources and preparing an action plan for their subject. However, with the exception of the co-ordinators for English and information and communication technology they do not have a clear enough overview of standards in their subject and do not take enough responsibility for improving them.
62. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked well to remedy those weaknesses identified in the previous report and have brought about significant improvements through their commitment to raising standards. At the time of a monitoring visit by Her Majesty's Inspectorate in October 1999 the school was judged to be making satisfactory progress against the key issues from the 1998 inspection. The school is well placed to continue to improve because the whole staff is committed to higher standards and works well as a team.
63. Systems for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the impact of its quality on pupils' learning have been introduced effectively in the last two years. This detailed structure for monitoring, with useful support from the Local Education Authority, has gone some way towards reducing the high level of unsatisfactory teaching highlighted in the last report. However, there is still room for further improvement. The criteria for judging standards and identifying areas for development in teaching are not sufficiently rigorous. Consequently, weaknesses in teaching are not always identified and the quality of teaching in a few classes remains an ongoing concern for the school.
64. There is very detailed analysis of the attainment of individual pupils and results are used to set challenging targets for teachers and pupils. The thoroughness of this analysis has led to an improvement in standards in mathematics and science, but has not yet had a strong enough impact on standards in English.
65. The school is very aware of its responsibility to provide equality of opportunity for all. All pupils, including those with disabilities, participate fully in all aspects of school life and have equal access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The procedures for special educational needs in the main school are managed soundly and the pupils receive a good level of support. There are appropriate individual education plans in place for these pupils and these are reviewed at suitable intervals. The designated governor is knowledgeable and keeps the governing body well informed.
66. The involvement of the governing body has improved since the time of the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The governors are better informed and well organised. They

manage their work efficiently through a system of committees, one of which is devoted to raising standards. The Personnel Committee made a considerable contribution in the previous term to ensure that the school was fully staffed. Governors are starting to ask probing questions and have a clearer understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have helped the school to gain Education Action Zone funding and have supported the school's Investors in People award.

67. Governors are strongly committed to improvement and involve themselves in the formulation and review of the School Improvement Plan. This plan is detailed and costed, with criteria for success and responsibilities allocated. Priorities are clear, the cycle for evaluation and review is secure and the plan provides an effective working document for future development.

### **Financial planning**

68. The priorities the school has identified for improvement are supported well by financial planning. Governors have a full range of accurate information about the school and its finances. The quality of school development planning has improved since the last inspection and is now good. All staff and governors are now involved appropriately in drawing up the plan. Governors monitor spending closely each month and monitor its impact on standards. They are now able to fulfil a strategic role in monitoring and evaluating the impact of their decisions. The headteacher ensures that the school takes full advantage of all sources of funding. For example, through Educational Action Zone funds the school has been able to increase support staffing to include a Raising Achievement Facilitator and a Learning Link Worker.
69. Financial control continues to be good. Administrative procedures enable the school to work efficiently. The work of the secretary and non-classroom staff makes an important contribution to its smooth daily running. The last audit report rated most financial procedures as good with some excellent. The school addresses audit recommendations promptly and effectively. With the support and guidance of the Local Education Authority the school is applying principles of best value effectively to its development.
70. The headteacher and the co-ordinator of special educational needs manage funds and teaching provision for these pupils well. Specific grants provide well-targeted extra support for them. The school uses funding for pupils with statements of special educational needs effectively. The school's spending on resources meets priority needs effectively. For example, teachers have significantly improved resources for English, mathematics, information and communication technology and history. As a result standards in these subjects are rising.
71. The school makes good use of new technology for teaching, learning, administration and financial management. For example, teachers make increasing use of the Internet to update their knowledge of subjects and to create resources. Teachers use the networked computer system for their lesson planning. All, therefore, have immediate access to each other's ideas. The school also makes effective use of the Dudley Grid for Learning.

### **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

72. Arrangements for staff development and performance management are now good. The headteacher has re-established the appraisal programme. This links staff training effectively to the school improvement plan and individual needs. All staff benefit from the school's achievement of a national standard award for staff development.
73. The school uses its staff to good effect. There is a good match of teachers and support

staff to the demands of the new National Curriculum and the special educational needs of the pupils. As a result, there has been a marked improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. Arrangements to support staff new to the school are good. The school looks after its newly-qualified teachers well. It is now well placed to train new teachers.

74. Accommodation is good, with the advantage of two halls and two information and communication technology suites. It is kept very clean and well maintained by the caretaker and his team and is bright with displays. The building has been repaired and renovated since the last inspection. Although classrooms are spacious, classes can sometimes distract each other because of the open plan nature of the rooms with shared areas. Outside areas are extensive but, with the exception of the quiet area, rather dull and uninviting. This is largely because play structures demolished recently on safety grounds have yet to be replaced. The main playground is newly resurfaced, but there are gaps between the uneven concrete slabs in the nursery area, making it an unsatisfactory play area for young children.
75. Resources are at least satisfactory for all subjects. They are good for English, history and physical education and very good for information and communication technology. All are readily accessible with the exception of the mathematics resources, which are stored very poorly among a lot of outdated practical apparatus.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

76. In order to raise standards and improve the education offered to pupils the governors, in partnership with the headteacher and staff, should:

(1) raise standards in:

- English throughout the school through structured development of language, particularly in speaking, and better development of handwriting, punctuation and neatness in written work throughout the school and the curriculum;
- design and technology, music and religious education at both key stages by ensuring that balanced schemes of work are implemented, and that the subjects are taught in a stimulating way, and by improving teachers' subject knowledge and confidence;
- information and communication technology at Key Stage 2 by continuing to implement the existing scheme of work effectively;

(paragraphs 6, 13-15, 17, 32, 37, 42, 46, 64, 87, 92, 106, 108, 112, 135, 147, 160, 164-5, 170-1, 176, 181, 184 and 186)

(2) develop the role of subject co-ordinators so that they take responsibility for standards in their subjects and for school improvement.

(paragraph 61)

In addition to the major issues above, the following less important issues should be considered in the action plan:

- The school does not use the wider community sufficiently as a resource for learning; (paragraphs 26, 44, 159 and 187)
- The provision for multicultural education is not developed well enough; (paragraphs 50 and 187)
- The outside play area for the foundation stage is unsatisfactory. (paragraph 74)

## OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

### Individual Needs Centre

77. Pupils make good progress in the Individual Needs Centre. Particularly good progress is made in the development of good attitudes and behaviour. Most pupils enter the centre after previous difficulties in learning, but they rapidly acquire better listening skills and improved relationships with adults and other pupils. Behaviour is good in all lessons, but is especially good during literacy and numeracy lessons.
78. Pupils who are placed in the Centre on a long-term basis make good progress in English, mathematics and science. Their communication skills develop so that they are able to understand questions and respond with relevant answers. Pupils describe events that have happened in their lives and show some recognition of the needs of the listener by varying the detail of their descriptions. More-able pupils write punctuated sentences and use several adjectives in their descriptions. Most pupils recognise rhymes and reorder jumbled sentences. All complete simple addition calculations and most subtract single units. Pupils construct tally charts and use simple, standard measurements. The more able use the correct mathematical and scientific terminology. All pupils follow a series of instructions in experimental work, although the less able find it difficult to write up the details of their investigations.
79. Those pupils who arrive in the centre in Years 5 and 6 have less time to develop their learning and therefore make less measurable progress in developing their subject skills. However, their progress is still satisfactory. All pupils make less progress in other subjects, mainly because of the deliberate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. They frequently find subjects such as geography and history difficult because of the level of literacy and general knowledge required.
80. Teaching is good. Lessons are planned carefully with well explained introductions that help pupils to understand the purpose of the lessons. The teacher and nursery nurse work together well and have a good understanding of each other's methods. Pupils' difficulties are identified quickly and sympathetic support enables them to adjust to the class situation. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils, which encourage all individuals to make contributions to whole-class activities. Lessons are presented enthusiastically and the enthusiasm is conveyed to pupils, who are frequently keen to improve the standards of their work. Skilled questioning enables staff to gain a good idea of pupils' progress.
81. There is a good knowledge of the strategies required for teaching basic skills in communication, literacy and numeracy. Tasks are of a suitable level of difficulty, enabling all pupils to achieve a degree of success but also helping them to develop their knowledge. Occasionally the more able, who can learn much more quickly than the majority of pupils, are not set tasks of sufficient challenge. A satisfactory level of homework is provided through suggested tasks in home-school books.
82. All pupils receive individual tuition sessions each week, where the focus is on improving particular basic skills, especially in literacy. A good level of dialogue is maintained between the teacher and pupils, who are enabled to explain any difficulties they are having with their work. Good use is made of praise to encourage greater effort and to recognise progress towards individual targets. Pupils' confidence in these sessions shows the strong relationships in the Centre. All pupils try hard and show considerable enjoyment in their work.

83. In classes in the main school the teacher and nursery nurse provide reliable support to help pupils to adjust to the larger group setting. Instructions are explained carefully and staff are active in supporting each individual. In some circumstances the Centre group work together and have limited contact with other pupils, but suitable arrangements are made to involve the pupils in more mixed groups on most occasions, especially when engaged in practical work.
84. Throughout their time in the Centre a high proportion of pupils' time is spent in developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy and in working towards individual targets. This emphasis is suitable for the pupils' needs and meets the requirements of their Statements of Special Educational Need. The centre follows the Local Education Authority's guidelines, but does not have its own curriculum policy to describe, for example, the growing amount of inclusion in the main school classes for some pupils. Detailed files are maintained for individual pupils, which include regular tutorial records. There is relatively little information about pupils' progress in relation to the skills of the National Curriculum. A satisfactory structure for individual education plans is in place.
85. There is a good level of liaison between the headteacher, the nominated special educational needs governor and the co-ordinator of the Centre. Class teachers recognise the importance of the Centre and welcome pupils into their lessons. Good use is made of the financial resources made available by the local authority. Suitable books and software have been bought. Modern computers have been purchased, which are used well by pupils. Staff make good use of the available space, although the Centre is rather small for the varied activities undertaken by pupils.
86. The Centre has developed satisfactorily since the time of the last inspection. It is characterised by enthusiasm and good teaching, although some aspects of co-ordination, for example in the development of curriculum policies, require improvement.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	122
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	10	33	50	7	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	30	263
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	84

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	5	97

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.3
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	19	18	37

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	15	14
	Girls	14	15	13
	Total	28	30	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (93)	81 (93)	73 (93)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	17
	Girls	16	14	18
	Total	30	28	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (90)	76 (90)	95 (95)
	National	* (82)	* (86)	* (87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	25	18	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	18	22
	Girls	12	13	16
	Total	27	31	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (56)	72 (59)	88 (88)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	20	21
	Girls	12	14	15
	Total	27	34	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (53)	79 (69)	84 (94)
	National	* (68)	* (69)	* (75)

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

\* National results not yet available

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	233
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	24.7

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

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	241.5

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

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

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

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

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

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

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	607,763
Total expenditure	617,629
Expenditure per pupil	2,191
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,045
Balance carried forward to next year	8,179

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 43.7%

Number of questionnaires sent out	263
Number of questionnaires returned	115

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	42	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	56	1	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	59	2	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	54	8	4	4
The teaching is good.	52	44	3	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	44	10	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	32	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	35	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	47	47	5	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	49	46	1	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	43	6	1	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	43	18	3	2

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

**AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

87. At the time of the last inspection provision for children in the nursery and reception classes was judged to be sound. Provision remains sound; teaching is satisfactory overall, the quality of planning has improved and teachers now track what pupils have learned more carefully. A new pre-nursery group has been introduced and it is beginning to make a strong contribution to the school's provision for its youngest pupils because the teaching is focused well on developing their skills and knowledge. Support staff continue to have a positive impact on children's learning through their informed and knowledgeable involvement in the lessons. The new foundation stage curriculum has been implemented appropriately. However, the current organisation of the curriculum does not provide enough structure for improving poor speaking and listening skills in a consistent way. The weakness in children's communication, pre-reading and writing skills identified in the last inspection remains a problem as children move into Year 1.

**Personal, social and emotional development**

88. The inspection took place early in the autumn term and children were only beginning their first day in nursery or their first full week in the reception class. Both adults and children coped well and children received a good level of security and support. Staff provide good role models and routines, such as tidying up, are already becoming well established.
89. Children enter the pre-nursery group with immature social skills. They make good progress so that by the time they reach nursery age they are ready to settle quickly into new routines. In the nursery children hang up their red and yellow aprons with little supervision. They wait patiently for the monitor to give out the milk, they are courteous to each other and their behaviour is good. Children display interest and enthusiasm as they enjoy the humour of their songs. Older nursery children show genuine care as they help to look after younger ones.
90. By the time children move into the reception class they have learnt, through constant reinforcement, to share and wait their turn. Early in the term children are already starting to work independently; they respond well to praise and particularly enjoy receiving their stickers for listening well. Occasionally they display some restlessness and bad manners towards each other when class control becomes a problem for the teacher.

**Communication, language and literacy**

91. A significant minority of children do not have much knowledge of books or print before they enter nursery. They sometimes lack basic vocabulary. Their speaking and listening skills are poorly developed and new children are often subdued and shy. Staff frequently have to work hard to get children to talk at all. The level of conversation varies considerably. One child has difficulty describing a piece of string or the feel of a feather on his face. Another talks excitedly about his pretend train journey to Merry Hill, whilst others playing in the sand do not know the name for a bucket.
92. Despite steady progress and a good level of support from staff and a visiting speech therapist many children still find difficulty expressing themselves when they reach the reception class. In a lesson where children were exploring and describing the texture of substances such as paint, water and jam many children only found one word to describe the various textures. Although staff work hard to encourage conversation, the current curriculum does not provide enough structure to ensure that children will have developed their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills sufficiently by the time they reach Year

1. Consequently, standards remain below average by the time children move into Year 1 and a low proportion of children are reaching the Early Learning Goals.

93. Nursery children of all abilities enjoy books and listen well when they are divided into three groups for story. One child retold the whole story of the 'Three Billy Goats Gruff' as she played with the farm animals. Another pretended the bowl of fruit she had collected was for 'The Hungry Caterpillar'. Paper, pencils and crayons are readily available for children to develop their writing skills and books are easily accessible in a quiet area. One more-able boy practises his 'Japanese' writing and readily writes his name on his work unaided, but there are too few activities to challenge this child. More commonly, however, children find difficulty in tracing patterns or forming letter shapes.
94. In the reception class children are already beginning to settle into some aspects of the literacy hour. They share the Big Book and 'Times and Rhymes' with their teacher. They start to learn about 'cover' and 'title' and one or two predict what is going to happen next. Although teaching and the pace of learning are satisfactory throughout the foundation stage, children who have recently moved into Year 1 are still very unsure about naming letter sounds and they have not acquired adequate strategies for working out new words.

### **Mathematical development**

95. Children's mathematical skills are developed better than their literacy skills. Through sound teaching in the nursery they make steady progress and reach standards similar to those of other four-year-olds when they start school. Nursery children are attentive and eager to learn about numbers. Staff encourage children to count stars for their 'Butterfly Star Chart'; they find out how many stickers have been given out for good work. They respond well when 'Poppy Pig' is choosing volunteers to count. Children are at various stages of development. One more-able child counts confidently to 28; others count to seven and most are secure with numbers to four.
96. Throughout the reception class children continue to develop sound mathematical skills and most reach the Early Learning Goals in mathematics by the time they are five. In one lesson children used cubes to create the model of a chair and a letter T from a simple plan. Most add on confidently but are less secure when subtracting. However, not all teaching of mathematics in the reception class is satisfactory. Children occasionally become restless when the work is too easy or when they have to wait a long time before they can make progress. This happens when the work set is too hard and they need constant adult support.

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

97. Children enter the nursery with varying degrees of basic knowledge. Most remember the names of the fruit they have eaten during snack time. Some talk about rabbits and birds as they sit drinking their milk. However, not all know about sheep and cows; some that do have difficulty pronouncing names and others do not know the word "feather". One child talked excitedly about older and younger brothers and sisters. Another explained that he liked staying with his grandparents, but he was unsure whether they are older or younger than his parents.
98. In the reception class a similar pattern of knowledge emerges. One child working on the computer displayed good control to move pieces of clothing successfully around the screen whilst dressing Teddy. Other children were less secure in their knowledge of the textures of some common substances such as flour. They know that their birthday is a special day and one child is aware that Christmas is a celebration day. In whole-school assembly most know that there are seeds in the middle of the apple when it is halved, but not all know that it might grow into a tree if a seed is planted.

99. Throughout the foundation stage, children have access to a range of equipment and materials to construct and build and they make steady progress in developing a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the world. Most are reaching the Early Learning Goals in this area by the time they enter Key Stage 1. Although teaching is generally satisfactory, it is occasionally unsatisfactory in the reception class when the teacher is unable to maintain discipline.

### **Physical development**

100. Physical development is generally appropriate to children of this age and steady progress is made towards achieving the Early Learning Goals for five-year-olds. The outdoor play area provides some opportunity for nursery children to develop their running, rolling, throwing and catching skills. However, there is no soft-landing surface and large apparatus has to be used with great care. All children display an awareness of others as they run and jump, but for many catching is still very difficult. In artwork one child had never used scissors before and was unable to cut without lots of help. Yet other children are very confident with glue spreaders, pencils and crayons.
101. The children in the reception class do not have their own play area. They are timetabled to use the nursery area once a week, but they do not have regular access for short periods of outdoor play. Activities planned for the week of the inspection had to be rearranged when it rained. Although children enjoyed throwing quoits onto pegs and using the nursery slide, the activities did little to develop their physical skills.

### **Creative development**

102. Children lack confidence in this area of learning when they enter nursery. Although they play together amicably in the home corner while ironing shirts and cooking tea, there is very little conversation. They giggle as the teacher uses a puppet to gain their attention and they become excited and enthusiastic as they try to fit the actions to a familiar song. The spacious nursery area is full of displays of children's work and a special place is reserved for 'Our Art Gallery'. Nursery staff create an appropriate atmosphere of fun learning and use praise and encouragement well to aid children's progress.
103. Children develop their creative and artistic skills steadily in the nursery. By the time they enter the reception class they have skills appropriate to their age and are reaching the Early Learning Goals. Teaching of creative skills is sound. Activities are well organised and well matched to the age range. Children sing 'Five Little Speckled Frogs' with enthusiasm and play the circle game 'One Little Elephant'. They remember nursery rhymes well from their literacy lesson.

## **ENGLISH**

104. National test results since 1996 confirm that standards are improving. However, pupils' performance in the 1999 national tests was still well below average at the end of Year 6. Little more than half reached the standard expected for their age. Very few did better than this. Pupils were not doing as well as those in similar schools. The work in the books and files of pupils in Years 3 to 6 shows that improving teaching is raising standards and these improvements are reflected in the better results in the 2000 national tests, which exceeded the school's targets. This is the reason why standards are now higher than those pupils achieved in the 1999 tests. For example, in this year's tests a higher proportion of pupils in Year 6 reached the expected standard for 11-year-olds and a fifth reached the higher Level 5.
105. In the 1999 tests for seven-year-olds writing standards were above average and well above those of similar schools. Reading standards were below average but close to those in similar schools; they have improved considerably since then. This is because of

improved teaching and the impact of the literacy hour on reading. Pupils now know securely the shapes and sounds of letters and simple words. Writing standards at the end of Year 2 are lower than those achieved in the 1999 tests and this is reflected in the results of the national tests in 2000. The lower standards are mainly because teachers are not developing pupils' handwriting and punctuation skills enough. Teachers are also finding that the literacy hour improves reading more than writing at this stage.

106. Standards have risen overall since the last inspection because of better teaching. However, pupils' language skills are not yet high enough. Standards are below average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Reading standards are close to the national average at the end of these years. This is because teachers have given priority to improving them. Standards in speech and writing are below the national averages. This is mainly because the school is not at present able to make up, by the time they leave school, for pupils' below-average language skills when they first come.

### **Speaking and listening**

107. The standard of pupils' speech is lower than expected for their age by the end both of Year 2 and Year 6. Teachers ensure that pupils listen carefully in nearly all lessons. However, many pupils speak in discussions only when the teacher asks them. Key Stage 1 pupils often answer in single words or half sentences. Few pupils give reasons or examples to explain their answers at this stage. When teachers focus on improving pupils' speech more start to speak out. For example, a Year 2 teacher pretended to be the granny in a story. Pupils had to find out about her life. They all started asking thoughtful questions in whole sentences. They also discovered a lot more about the story in this way.
108. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are usually confident and contribute more to learning in lessons than the younger pupils. In some very good lessons speech and listening arise from pupils' interest in new work. Their comments and questions then enrich the learning of the whole class. For example, in a Year 5 art lesson pupils spoke nearly all the time as they worked. They were sharing their discoveries about the colours of water, textures and techniques. There is little speech development when there is only one possible answer to teachers' questions. The school does not adequately plan for pupils' speech development or the use of drama in learning.

### **Reading**

109. Pupils' reading standards are as expected for their ages. There is good progress in Years 1 and 2. This is because the literacy hour has improved teachers' skills and the quality and interest of reading books in lessons. By the end of Year 2 nearly all pupils read simple storybooks by themselves. Most pupils read their own writing. As a result they begin to spot mistakes and so improve accuracy. Able pupils read aloud fast and with enthusiastic expression. Nearly all pupils read regularly at home to parents. The school plans to improve home-school reading by buying new and interesting books to replace some of the worn-out old ones. However, teachers do not always change pupils' reading books often enough.
110. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to make sound progress in reading. Small groups of pupils in Years 3 and 4 make good progress in reading in their Additional Literacy lessons. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress in reading through extra support. Brighter and average pupils read for enjoyment at home, but few pupils read up by themselves on school subjects. Difficulties in understanding information text delay learning at times. For example, pupils in Year 6 made slow progress in their study of the outbreak of World War II because most found it hard to read newspapers from 1939. Library skills are below average for pupils' ages at both key stages. The school has addressed this weakness by arranging suitable weekly library lessons. In these



pupils learn and develop their skills in finding out as well as reading and changing books.

## **Writing**

111. Progress in writing throughout the school is sound overall and the pupils with special educational needs do well at Key Stage 2 because the support they receive is well focused on their needs. All pupils write appropriately for a range of audiences in a variety of styles. Key Stage 1 pupils remember their letters and the most used words. Average and less able pupils often forget to space words out and to use capital letters and full stops. Most pupils spell words just as they sound and sometimes miss words out. Pupils begin to draft and recopy their work to improve it.
112. Books and files of pupils in Key Stage 2 show the need for improved punctuation, presentation and detail in writing across the curriculum. For these reasons pupils' writing commonly lacks force and clearness at this stage. There is little variety in sentence forms. Story-writing skills do not develop enough. Pupils write a lot of stories, but few teachers give sufficient step-by-step guidance on improving techniques. The school is working to improve writing at this stage by giving all pupils regular lessons in writing. Pupils' imaginative and information writing skills develop soundly in some other lessons, for example in history and science. However, teachers do not plan for pupils' writing development in other subjects so as to make the most of each opportunity.
113. The quality of teaching and learning in English is now good. Two of the 15 lessons seen were very good, six good and the remaining seven satisfactory. As a result standards at both key stages are set to improve. In the very good lessons pupils pick up teachers' enthusiasm, pace and detailed understanding of language and books. As a result pupils work fast, cover a lot of ground and are very interested. In good lessons teachers involve pupils of all abilities in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Tasks and resources ensure good concentration and new learning throughout the lesson. Teaching is less effective when pupils spend too much time just listening and lack opportunities to contribute to learning.
114. The subject is led and managed well. Pupils at both key stages usually meet their national test targets. Significant proportions of pupils surpass them. The co-ordinator has a clear view of priority needs. The school is taking appropriate steps to meet them. Future targets are demanding but achievable.

## **MATHEMATICS**

115. In the 1999 tests for 11-year-olds the proportion of pupils reaching expected levels or above was below average when compared with that in all schools but close to the average for similar schools. Standards have risen steadily since 1997. Results of the 2000 tests indicate a further rise in the percentage of pupils achieving average and above levels. The school exceeded its predicted targets for pupils in Year 6.
116. The results of the 1999 national tests for seven-year-olds indicate that the proportion of pupils reaching average standards was similar to that found nationally and the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels was well above average. When compared with those in other similar schools standards were very high. Standards rose considerably in 1998 then declined slightly in 1999. The results of the 2000 tests highlight some concerns that the school is in the process of analysing. Although the proportion of pupils reaching average levels remained similar, the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels had dropped significantly.
117. Inspection findings indicate that present standards at both key stages are similar to the national expectation. However, pupils at Key Stage 1 do not have as much opportunity to

apply their skills to problem-solving as do pupils at Key Stage 2. This lack of opportunity sometimes affects standards of work of the more able and has some bearing upon the reduction in the percentage of pupils reaching higher levels in national tests. At Key Stage 2 pupils currently in Year 6 have the potential to reach even higher standards than those achieved last year. Many pupils are already demonstrating mature mathematical thinking in their work.

118. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and progress was sound, although there was insecurity in some basic number skills. Standards were unsatisfactory, however, by the time pupils reached the end of Key Stage 2 and they were not making as much progress as they should. There were weaknesses in teaching in Year 4 and the co-ordinator had very little time to look at pupils' work or evaluate standards.
119. There has been a good level of improvement in many areas, with a significant rise in standards at the end of Key Stage 2. Overall, the quality of teaching is now much higher, particularly at Key Stage 2, although some unsatisfactory teaching still remains. The monitoring of provision for pupils is thorough; the analysis of test results is impressive and the information extracted from this analysis provides a secure base for target setting and tracking individual pupils' progress. The oral part of numeracy hours has also had a positive impact upon improving mental arithmetic skills. However, much work remains to be done. Teachers' daily assessment of pupils' work and end-of-topic assessments are not yet sufficiently focused or accurate. In addition, the co-ordinator does not have a clear enough overview of standards in Key Stage 1. Resources are poorly organised and almost totally inaccessible.
120. By the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils are developing confidence with numbers. More-able pupils are secure with numbers far beyond 100 and they are developing a good mathematical vocabulary. Although they make steady progress, they are sometimes held back when the introductory part of lessons does not contain any oral work to challenge or motivate them. Pupils of average ability have a sound mathematical understanding of numbers as words, but they are occasionally hampered by their lack of reading skills. Pupils with special educational needs match numbers and objects up to 10. They make good progress in lessons where work is well matched to their needs and the level of support is high.
121. By Year 6 most pupils have developed at least adequate numeracy skills. More-able pupils use numbers with confidence and think logically. In one lesson pupils solved a challenging maze puzzle problem by applying previously acquired knowledge well. One talked about divisibility and others listened carefully to collect the necessary information from the teacher's instructions. Pupils of average ability use mathematical language well. They understand factors and multiples and reach average standards across the full mathematics curriculum, although their work is less secure in problem solving. The lower-achieving pupils still struggle with basic number work, although some, but not all, have a reasonable recall of multiplication facts.
122. Pupils enter the school with mathematical ability similar to others of their age and develop their skills steadily throughout the school. The numeracy hour has had a positive impact on the progress of most pupils, although the most able do not always make as much progress as they could in the occasional lesson when little attention is given to their needs.
123. Through looking at pupils' previous work, it is clear that their progress over time is sound. Pupils of all abilities at Key Stage 1 gain confidence when using numbers and increase the breadth of their knowledge. Pupils at Key Stage 2 benefit from working in ability sets

and this has improved the rate of progress made by those with special educational needs. The increase in their depth of knowledge over a range of topics such as symmetry and angle work is noticeable. Less able pupils consolidate their work well in Year 3 and there is a steady improvement in the volume of work, the standard of presentation and breadth of knowledge as pupils move through the school.

124. Pupils' attitudes towards mathematics are generally positive and less able pupils in particular are well motivated and want to succeed. In a lower ability Year 5 group pupils were genuinely excited as they realised that they understand the work. Most pupils work well independently and persevere with challenging tasks. Occasionally, some pupils are slow to respond to questions during oral sessions, but most become enthusiastic when the teacher targets questions well. Pupils display little interest and no real enthusiasm when the teacher does not identify and support those who have not fully understood. Pupils try to use correct mathematical language. Relationships are strong and the majority of pupils get on well together whether they are working on their own or in groups.
125. The overall quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and in one lesson teaching was good. In this good Year 2 lesson the teacher used the oral session to consolidate and challenge. Her explanation was very clear and she varied her questioning until she was sure that pupils had understood. Occasionally, however, for pupils in the middle of the key stage the introductory part is too long and the pace of the lesson is not crisp enough.
126. Overall, teaching in Key Stage 2 is good, although its quality is more variable. Teaching is very good in a quarter of lessons, good in a third, satisfactory in a quarter, but unsatisfactory in the remaining sixth. In a very good mental arithmetic lesson with a lower ability group the teacher focused her questions carefully until everyone was totally involved. She had secure enough subject knowledge to vary her explanations and keep everyone interested. Consequently, all pupils succeed in rounding numbers and multiplying by 10 and 100. In another very good Year 3 lesson pupils recapped on the previous day's work, learned about multiples, revised and increased their recall of the three-times tables and consolidated work on metres and centimetres – all in the space of half an hour. In other, less successful, lessons lengthy introductions and explanations left pupils with too little time to complete their main activity.
127. Planning is generally of good quality in all lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are identified in lesson plans and work is well matched to their needs. An appropriate amount of homework is used to support work done in the classroom. When teachers check its quality and insist on its completion it makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
128. The successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and re-grouping of older pupils, the much needed emphasis on improving basic numeracy skills and the more consistent approach towards planning and monitoring teachers' and pupils' work all have a positive impact on standards. Much work remains to be done, but realistic targets for future development form part of the school's very purposeful approach towards raising standards.

## **SCIENCE**

129. In the National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Key Stage 2 results were above the national average with a high proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5. Compared with those in similar schools, the results were well above average and the tests in 2000 reflect a continuing trend of rising standards. Teacher assessments undertaken at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 show that pupils' attainment was above the

national average. Compared with those in similar schools the results were very high. The assessments in 2000 show a further rise in attainment.

130. Inspection findings concur with these assessments, which result from the good quality of teaching of the subject throughout the school. There is a very strong emphasis on scientific enquiry, investigation and consideration of findings. The subject has improved well at Key Stage 1 and dramatically at Key Stage 2 since the previous inspection.
131. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know what science is concerned with. Pupils in Year 2 investigate competently how materials can be changed when different forces are exerted on them. The teacher makes very clear that some of their results may not match some of their predictions. They begin to realise that science deals with finding out and not necessarily with being right or wrong. This clear investigative approach is typical of work carried out throughout the school. Recording of investigations begins in Year 1 when pupils label plants and body parts well. They draw simple electric circuits and write with understanding about what they observe. Pupils in Year 2 begin to predict and check their results. They keep careful records, such as when they monitor temperature throughout the day and observe changes. By the end of the key stage pupils have a good knowledge of all elements of the science curriculum.
132. Through Key Stage 2 there is good progression in the way that pupils plan and record their investigations. More explanation is given and pupils in Year 6 plan and carry out investigations independently. The scheme of work provides for good coverage of the full science curriculum. Pupils' particular strengths appear to be in the areas of scientific enquiry, materials, forces and physical processes. Despite the limited language skills of many pupils they overcome this and achieve clear explanations. By Year 6 pupils regularly include charts, diagrams and tables to illustrate their work.
133. Teaching throughout the school is good. The consistently good records of pupils' work show clear evidence of high expectations and good subject knowledge. Pupils are taught to think as scientists. Pupils in Year 2 follow strenuous literacy and numeracy lessons with science sessions. The teacher prepares them by 'emptying their heads' of numeracy, then asks them to put on their science caps and put their magnifying glasses in their pockets, which is simple but effective in gaining their full attention. The pupils then show they have remembered vocabulary relevant to the lesson. Pupils in Year 6 particularly enjoy the subject because the good learning made earlier in the school prepares them well to carry out independent investigations. In one of their first lessons in Year 6 they were expected to plan a fair investigation. This required them to consider one variable only: the factors affecting dissolving, to sequence their instructions and quantify their results. Pupils work effectively in groups of three and read out their plans to the class. The involvement of and work produced by a group of pupils with special educational needs was particularly impressive.
134. In the best lessons seen the teachers' own interest and enthusiasm are evident and reflected in the pupils. Good management invariably means that the enthusiasm is well directed. A Year 5 teacher, new to the school, had already established a good rapport so that she obtained a purposeful response from pupils. The teacher focused on the specific vocabulary, introducing new words such as 'displaced' quite naturally. The lesson was a good mixture of observation, practical activities in pairs and general discussion. The class teacher stimulated interest throughout with good support from a classroom assistant so that good learning took place.
135. Most teachers emphasise certain vocabulary, but there is insufficient emphasis on a structured development of key words, particularly in giving pupils experience of placing the words in their context. Most teachers mark work thoroughly, but only a few pose

questions to stimulate further thinking. In one or two classes at Key Stage 2 pupils consistently misspell scientific vocabulary with no correction from the teacher. High on the school's agenda is to improve the presentation of work and this is rightly so. Some pupils use their literacy skills well when explaining understanding. Numeracy skills are used well in measurements and calculations. However, the use of information and communication technology is not very evident. Overall the subject has made very good progress since the previous inspection.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

136. Standards throughout the school are similar to those seen in the majority of schools. The timing of the inspection meant that there was little evidence of recent work displayed around the school. Pupils in Year 6 show good knowledge of notable artists and the type of work for which they are known.
137. Pupils at Key Stage 1 experience a sound range of different techniques and media to produce bubble and string painting, collages and observational drawings. They mix colours to obtain tints and shades of green and brown. There was little evidence of three-dimensional work. On occasions tasks are matched to support other curriculum areas. The production of a large collage picture of a scarecrow reinforced Year 1 pupils' knowledge of materials studied in science.
138. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use sketchbooks to develop pencil techniques, although progression is not always clear. Good use is made of these books for pupils to imitate the style of artists such as Lowry and Clarice Cliff. Pupils use different media such as pencils, charcoal and oil pastels and focus on different elements such as shape, pattern, proportion and perspective.
139. Teaching is good overall, with some teachers showing very good knowledge of the subject. Pupils in Year 5 were very impressed when the teacher stimulated their interest by talking about and showing examples of the work of Van Gogh and Klimt. They were keen to try out different media and techniques to see the effect. The very high quality of the teaching led to pupils of all abilities achieving well with very effective wave, depth and light effects. They explored techniques and tools independently and were very eager to display their work to others. A knowledgeable Year 6 teacher very skilfully highlighted the important features of the work of Clarice Cliff. She stressed specific vocabulary and raised awareness of words such as 'ceramics'. Pupils are extremely attentive and interested during both the lesson introduction and the review, when they share and appreciate the work of their peers. Some of their work is computer generated competently.
140. The new subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and keen to raise standards. As she is already aware of the need for more multicultural experiences to be provided, resources have been obtained. Some teachers have recently gained in confidence in the subject whilst others have good expertise. The sketchbooks, however, are not used enough as an indicator of progression in skills. The visit of the canal artists had a beneficial impact on developing pupils' skills, but these opportunities are not given often enough.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

141. Evidence from lessons, a scrutiny of articles made and the plans for them, and discussions with pupils indicates that their standards are well below those in other schools. Achievement over time has been limited because the subject has received too little attention. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make unsatisfactory progress at both key stages because the programme being taught does

not develop key skills and knowledge. Standards have not yet improved since the last inspection, when progress was found to be limited by a lack of planning and work which was not always related to the National Curriculum.

142. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have had only limited experience of the range of materials required and their making skills are below average. They use cardboard to make their models of vehicles and socks to make puppets and have sewn patterns on fabric. Pupils have made pizzas and biscuits in cookery lessons. However, they have little experience of making wheeled vehicles or making models to their own design.
143. At Key Stage 2 the pupils' range of experience is also limited. They carry out investigations, but have rarely used construction kits. Pupils have little opportunity to make models with moving parts, or using different materials. Although they design their own models using diagrams, occasionally with measurements, their experience is limited and skills are well below average for their age. Pupils execute their designs in only a limited range of materials and have little experience of working with card, fabric or food. In different years they have made Greek temples, Roman sandals and Viking ships, which has been of some benefit to their making skills but had little impact on developing their design capabilities.
144. In addition, the major weakness at both key stages is the lack of a structured programme to teach pupils about mechanisms. Consequently, the oldest pupils have no knowledge of levers, pulleys, joints or gears, for example, and are unable to use these in designing their own models. Pupils have developed some ability to work independently and in groups. They have not had, however, sufficient experience of evaluating their own work. Pupils have lacked the opportunity to use the full range of resources, such as structures, food and construction kits, in their design and technology work. No finished models were seen, but the designs made by older pupils are not of the quality usual for pupils of this age.
145. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject at both key stages. They enjoy their work and are enthusiastic about the lessons. Their concentration is sound and the oldest pupils worked well together when considering different types of shelter. Their response is a major factor in their ability to make some progress through an undemanding programme of work.
146. Teaching is satisfactory in individual lessons at both key stages and it is occasionally very good at Key Stage 1. Pupils are given appropriate tasks that develop some of their skills and build on those already acquired. Lessons are structured carefully and class control is good. The activities move at a sound pace and pupils are supported well throughout the activities. In the lesson in Year 1 when teaching was particularly good the teacher used discussion and sharing of ideas very effectively to promote the use of imagination in designing vehicles. Constant and supportive encouragement promoted an impressive pace of work and pupils were guided to take a high level of pride in their work to ensure that it was presented very well.
147. However, these individual lessons do not together make a satisfactory experience. It is apparent that the programme being taught is not adequate to develop pupils' skills and knowledge to the level required. Most activities develop pupils' capabilities at a very low level and there is little focus on the design of models and how they fulfil the intended function. Teachers lack sufficient knowledge of the demands of the subject and how it should be taught. There are few opportunities to use and extend numeracy skills through use of measurement or to develop literacy skills through careful planning and evaluation.
148. The new co-ordinator is enthusiastic and although she has no expertise in the subject is

to attend a 10 day training course very soon. The scheme of work, using elements of the model scheme provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, does not provide a sound basis for teachers to plan their work. There is not enough focus on the skills and knowledge required and teachers have not had enough support to develop their knowledge to implement a balanced programme of work.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

149. Standards are as expected for pupils' ages at the end of Years 2 and 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in understanding key features of the world in which they live. Standards for seven-year-olds are similar to those found at the previous inspection, but are lower for the 11-year-olds, whose standards were high at that time. Pupils' books and files show two main reasons for this difference. Previous weaknesses in teaching at Key Stage 2 had affected the quality of pupils' learning. The introduction of literacy and numeracy hours cut the time given to geography in the last two years.
150. By the end of Year 2 pupils are competent in making and using drawings, symbols and maps to represent the school and its neighbourhood. They have suitable knowledge of the names and locations of some of the countries of the United Kingdom and the world. Pupils remember some of the different features that maps may show. They have an appropriate understanding of good and bad features of environments, weather and how climates affect people's clothes and lives in different parts of the world.
151. By the end of Year 6 pupils' knowledge and understanding of maps are as expected for their age. They use grid references and understand scale, for example. Pupils know how the world has different climatic regions. They compare temperatures in different cities across the world. Higher-achieving pupils remember and explain the causes of the seasons. Pupils have suitable experience both of fieldwork and the study of geographical themes such as rivers. For example, pupils measured and logged depths and flow rates in the River Stour. These experiences make a positive contribution to the development of skills in numeracy. Pupils have a sound understanding of how human activities are changing the environment, particularly through their study of rainforests.
152. The quality of teaching was good in three of the five lessons seen and sound in two. In the good lessons teachers showed secure subject knowledge and used interesting resources that held pupils' interest. For example, pupils in Year 2 discovered many human and natural features in the Island of Coll. They learned the difference between them in an interesting way by studying a large picture of the harbour from their literacy reader. Teachers link work effectively in this way with pupils' prior learning and experience. In these good lessons teachers also ensure that tasks match pupils' abilities but also stretch them. For example, pupils in Year 4 had many thoughtful suggestions about how to measure the quality of sound in different parts of the school environment. This was because the teacher began the lesson with interesting guided observational work and challenged their ideas in discussion. Teaching is less effective when pupils have to spend too long just listening to a string of teachers' questions and explanations.
153. The school is well placed to broaden and deepen pupils' understanding of geography. A sound scheme of work is in place for a new set of topics which follow the best national guidance. The school has a good opportunity to increase observational learning and fieldwork and to focus the subject's contribution to the development of pupils' language and number skills.

## **HISTORY**

154. Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are those expected for pupils' ages. These are similar to those found at the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, gain appropriate knowledge and understanding of the past.
155. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a sound understanding of change and local history. They appreciate some of the main developments in schools and transport. For example, they have secure knowledge of the purpose and working of canals. They recall the causes and some of the important effects of major events in English history, such as the Great Fire of London. Pupils understand the main differences between the lives of families and children in the past and their own. Through awareness of the stages in their own lives they begin to understand change over time at the expected level for their age.
156. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a firm knowledge of important changes in Britain since the 1930s. They realise how technology has advanced and how World War II affected the lives of previous generations. Pupils remember key facts about the ancient Egyptian and Greek civilisations. They appreciate securely some of the differences between everyday life in those times and life today. Pupils recall some of the effects of the settlement in Britain of Romans, Saxons and Vikings. Understanding of the causes of these invasions is limited, however.
157. The quality of teaching and learning is sound. There was satisfactory teaching in four of the seven lessons seen. The quality in the other three was good. Pupils of all abilities are evidently learning most about history from strong direct experiences. For example, pupils spoke enthusiastically about their experiences at the Black Country Museum. They remembered a lot about the recent history of local life, work and transport.
158. When teaching is good teachers ensure that pupils keep interested and concentrating. Lessons go on at a good pace and teachers give precise individual help as needed. Pupils play a full part in learning and are given tasks that match differing abilities. Teachers strengthen understanding in effective reviews of learning at the end of lessons. Resources from the past enliven learning. For example, ration books, clothing coupons and Ministry of Information posters improved Year 6 pupils' general knowledge of the 1940s. Teaching is less effective when pupils have to spend too long sitting and listening. There is less interest in learning focused mainly on book information. Overall, the use of a wide range of textual sources and pupils' own writing make a sound contribution to their literacy skills.
159. Conversations with pupils and an examination of their books and files show that the school does not make enough use of fieldwork and direct observation. There was only limited work on artefacts or observational drawing during the inspection. However, the school is well placed to improve the quality of learning. The co-ordinator has written an interesting and appropriate scheme of work to implement the new National Curriculum. The school has also improved the number and range of artefacts to enliven lessons.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

160. Evidence from lesson observations, examples of previous work and discussions with pupils and teachers indicates that attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is close to the average seen nationally, but that at the end of Key Stage 2 it is below average. However, pupils are making sound progress throughout the school and this shows an improvement in standards since the last inspection.



161. By the time they are seven pupils of all abilities have secure keyboard and mouse skills. They open and close programs independently and save and print their work. Many are developing the ability to make informed decisions when using adventure programs, for example when they have to collect jelly beans to progress through a game. Pupils have suitable skills in using the mouse to move objects around the screen and in using data-handling programs to present information they have collected. Their use of art programs to make pictures, for example of the seaside is competent.
162. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils have average skills and knowledge in many areas of the information and communication technology curriculum. However, there are weaknesses that lower their overall performance, particularly in control technology, such as the ability to work knowledgeably with programmable robots. These are due to the inadequacies of the curriculum in the past. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress in almost all lessons because these deficiencies have been addressed and in some lessons they are developing their skills and knowledge rapidly.
163. Pupils in Year 6 are confident with data handling and spreadsheets. Some try out their own musical compositions using the music program. From Year 3, pupils are competent in using e-mail and the oldest pupils use the Internet successfully to research in history and geography. They are proficient in exploring the possibilities of the computer programs and learn to use new programs very rapidly.
164. In an effective lesson in Year 6, pupils prepared a slide using a multimedia package. By the end of the lesson almost all had completed their slide, incorporating text, graphics and sound effects. These pupils have wide experience of using word-processing programs and are able to 'cut and paste' text and use graphics from other programs. The more able work rapidly and accurately, while those with special educational needs generally require additional support to complete their work. However, most pupils' keyboard skills are rudimentary; few use two hands and most only use one finger, very hesitantly, to type. This deficiency is a result of lack of practice from an early age and limits the speed at which pupils of all abilities are able to work.
165. In addition, throughout both key stages there is insufficient opportunity for pupils to develop their control and modelling skills. This is a particular weakness at Key Stage 2. Pupils have some experience of using technology in these areas when they visit the Kingswood Centre, but this does not bring their skills to the required level. They do not have sufficient experience of activities such as giving a series of instructions to the floor or screen turtle. Levels of attainment in this strand do not always match ability.
166. Pupils enjoy using the computers and their enthusiasm is a positive factor in their learning, particularly when the lessons are planned carefully to build on their skills and knowledge. In discussion pupils in Year 6 are very confident and use the language of computers with maturity. Information technology is a developing part of school life. Staff expertise and confidence have improved since the last inspection and teachers use their classroom computers as a natural part of their planning procedures. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to the development of literacy and numeracy through the use of word-processing programs and data-handling.
167. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and is sometimes good or very good at Key Stage 2. However, it is occasionally unsatisfactory at this key stage. The best teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge and a clear understanding of the way in which pupils develop their skills. The work builds carefully on pupils' competence and teachers ensure that all are involved and progressing. The very good resources provided through the Dudley Grid for Learning are used to best effect. When unsatisfactory

teaching occurs too much information is introduced at one time and it is therefore impossible for the teacher to support all pupils who need help.

168. There is a good scheme of work that supports teachers in planning their work and sets out what is to be taught in each year. Software is linked appropriately to topics and the programme is balanced to ensure that all elements receive a balanced time. The enthusiastic co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and has worked hard to ensure that the school is very well resourced. She gives a good level of support to her colleagues and a clear sense of direction to development. Her work and that of her colleagues in improving their skills have made a major contribution to the raised standards seen in the school. The school has not yet, however, integrated information and communication technology into the whole curriculum and teachers do not turn to the technology naturally as a teaching aid. Consequently, computers in classrooms are not used to their full potential in other subjects.

## **MUSIC**

169. At the time of the last inspection standards were similar to those found in other schools at the end of Key Stage 1 but below average by the end of Key Stage 2. Progress was satisfactory at Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. Some teaching at Key Stage 2 was unsatisfactory and singing throughout the school was judged to be weak.
170. Current standards are still below those of other schools at the end of both key stages; although the school has made some improvements, these have not been enough to raise standards. The appointment of a music specialist and the introduction of a realistic scheme of work for non-specialist class teachers have started to have a positive impact on standards and the quality of teaching. The co-ordinator has also identified strengths and weaknesses within the current provision. Class teachers are more willing to take their own music lessons, with guidance and support, although some unsatisfactory teaching still remains. Resources have increased to include a small range of multicultural instruments. However, pupils do not make adequate progress because music has not been an important part of school life. They learn skills in an unstructured way, depending on the subject security of their class teacher and they do not experience a broad enough range of activities to allow sufficient depth of knowledge and understanding.
171. Although satisfactory standards were reached in most individual lessons during the week of the inspection, progress over time is unsatisfactory because pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to develop their skills in any systematic way as they progress through the school. Discussion with pupils reveals that by the time pupils reach Year 2 they have very little recall of any songs or music they have learnt, listened to or composed during their time at Key Stage 1. A similar pattern emerges at Key Stage 2. Although pupils recall isolated pieces of work, such as a composition linked to their rain forest work in Year 5 or using a computer program, they have very little recall of listening to music in any constructive way. Their knowledge of tuned and untuned percussion instruments is weak and they do not have much understanding of musical terminology.
172. An interest in singing is starting to develop. The school choir contains a good balance of boys and girls from Year 4 to Year 6. Pupils are proud of their performances at places such as Merry Hill and Dudley Music Festival. They sing with commitment and enthusiasm. Other activities such as song practice are not as successful, partly because pupils cannot read the words on the overhead projector screen.
173. Another positive aspect of music provision is the peripatetic flute and clarinet lessons provided free of charge by Dudley Music Service. Pupils currently having lessons are appreciative of the fact that instruments are loaned. They are able to continue with the

same teacher when they move to secondary education and the standard of their playing is good. In the weekly achievement assembly other pupils show genuine interest and respect for the flautists' performance.

174. Pupils' attitudes towards music vary considerably. Most are very positive, but a few pupils expressed a strong dislike. At Key Stage 1 pupils remain well behaved and enthusiastic as they make their animal sounds and they listen attentively to their tape-recorded work from the previous week. Their answers are frequently very imaginative and they co-operate well with each other in group music-making activities. At Key Stage 2 some pupils display embarrassment and do not express their ideas very easily, while other pupils confidently describe the 'Aquarium' music with ideas such as the sound of ice. In Year 6 pupils enjoy the challenge of creating singing games for younger pupils.
175. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, although one of six lessons observed was unsatisfactory. Class teachers cope well with their subject insecurity and try to provide a range of appropriate material. In most lessons activities are planned well, but teachers are very unsure about what standards they should expect and are not always able to cater for the needs of musically gifted pupils. Teachers do not always provide a sufficiently balanced range of activities to encourage breadth of knowledge. In addition, the open-plan arrangement between classrooms also causes problems. In a Year 4 lesson the class had difficulty when listening to a quiet extract from the 'Carnival of the Animals' because the adjacent class was singing.
176. No recent training has taken place because the school has had to concentrate on the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Although the co-ordinator monitors planning and supports individual teachers with class lessons during her release time, no one has a clear enough understanding of the standards achieved or the progress made.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

177. Standards at both key stages are similar to those seen in the majority of schools. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress. Standards in swimming are around average, with the vast majority of pupils able to swim at least 25 metres by the time they leave. With much improved provision, so that all pupils from Year 2 upwards will experience swimming in every school year, standards are set to rise further.
178. Pupils at Key Stage 1 enjoy moving to interpret different musical sounds in their dance lessons. Teaching of dance in most classes is good. Teachers manage pupils firmly but without dousing their enthusiasm for the lesson. Planning is good, so that pupils develop their skills well. Pupils in Year 1 tend to lack awareness of space, although when they are reminded this improves. Both teacher and classroom assistant set lively examples to which pupils respond well. The Year 2 teacher similarly leads by example, radiating enthusiasm and enjoyment. She handled a reluctant boy sensitively so that ultimately he participated. By this age the majority of pupils show some contrast in their movement according to the music. They have a sense of rhythm and control appropriate to their age. At the end of the warm up they know that they are ready to dance "because our hearts are beating faster". Pupils observe each other and are beginning to comment constructively on the quality of others' performances.
179. Games in Year 6 are taught effectively. The teachers organise and manage pupils very well. Teaching of skills is based on secure subject knowledge and high expectations of behaviour and effort. Challenges are increased by moving pupils further apart, for example, so that good reinforcement and improvement of skills take place. Both teachers

maintain good pace to the lesson, ringing the changes so that pupils retain their interest and face fresh challenges. When skills are applied in small-sided games the vast majority of pupils show a good sense of fair play and try hard to work as a team. Those playing football use space well, but this is not the case in hockey. Another Key Stage 2 lesson was not successful, with a lack of organisation and insecure subject knowledge. Consequently pupils achieved little.

180. The areas of the subject seen during the inspection were limited, but the overall picture is satisfactory. The two new co-ordinators are enthusiastic and aware of how they can improve the subject. The new provision for swimming is considerably better than in most schools. Resources are good, as is the ethos of the subject; pupils look smart in lessons, work hard, share well and enjoy their lessons. All pupils have equal opportunities to participate, including those with physical disabilities. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is provided which develop further the skills of those who take part.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

181. The attainment of pupils, including those with special educational needs, in religious education is below the standards expected locally at both key stages. Pupils show some knowledge of a range of faiths and have sound recall of some of the stories they have heard. However, their knowledge overall is sketchy and they do not have enough understanding of the impact of faith on people's lives. Standards have declined since the previous inspection.
182. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know few of the features of the Christian church and have little understanding about why they are important. They have only patchy recall of some of the Old Testament stories they have heard and confuse them. Pupils know the bare details of the birth and death of Jesus, but are uncertain about what is celebrated at Christmas and Easter.
183. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have gained some knowledge of the different faiths and are able, to some extent, to discriminate between them. They have a basic knowledge of some of the features of Christianity, Islam and Judaism. However, their knowledge of these religions is rudimentary and they have little understanding of the impact of faith on the lives of believers. Pupils' knowledge of the life of Christ is insecure and they have little understanding of his work while on earth. Although Islam is given prominence in the curriculum, this is not apparent from pupils' appreciation of its beliefs and practices. There is better appreciation of some of the features of Judaism because a teacher who was herself Jewish made the lessons relevant and interesting.
184. From an observation of lessons, pupils' work throughout the schools and talking with those at the end of both key stages it is clear that they do not make enough progress. They are unable to build progressively on their understanding of religions and to learn about the deeper issues in life through their study of the subject.
185. Pupils' response and attitudes to religious education lessons are satisfactory in the majority of lessons at both key stages, but there is an evident dislike of the subject through the school as a consequence of the uninspiring way in which it is taught. When teaching is effective pupils demonstrate that they are able to give thoughtful and considered responses. They are attentive towards and interested in the work they are given and show respect for the beliefs they are studying. In the majority of lessons, however, their attitude is one of polite indifference.
186. Teaching is satisfactory at both key stages and in the one lesson seen at Key Stage 1 it was good. Teachers try hard to make their lessons relevant, but activities are often

superficial and do not develop pupils' understanding because the teacher's knowledge is insecure. It is evident from pupils' work that in too many lessons they are required either to complete an undemanding worksheet or to copy the teacher's writing from the board. This develops neither their subject knowledge nor their literacy skills. Religious education has had only limited attention recently and it is clear that it has not been taught thoroughly or often enough to build progressively on pupils' knowledge and understanding. This situation is now being remedied and the subject is given an appropriate amount of time in all classes. Too often, however, pupils have been given factual information without the necessary background of origins of belief or the opportunity to consider deeper meanings

187. The ineffective teaching of religious education in the past was due in part to the scheme of work that did not have sufficient structure to enable teachers to build on pupils' understanding and knowledge consistently. There is an adequate new scheme of work based on the locally agreed syllabus. This contains basic coverage of the faiths and topics to be covered, but in practice it does not give sufficient guidance on how the subject can be taught in an interesting and inspiring way. Teachers have too little support to enable them to bring the subject to life and make it relevant to the lives of their pupils. Visits to places of worship and visitors of other faiths are rarely used to inspire pupils and broaden their understanding of religion and the multicultural nature of British life.