

INSPECTION REPORT

LEIGHSWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Aldridge

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 131433

Headteacher: Mrs J A Taylor

Reporting inspector: Mr L Lewin
22330

Dates of inspection: 26th - 29th March 2001

Inspection number: 230254

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Broadmeadow Aldridge Walsall West Midlands
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Peel
Date of previous inspection:	N/A (School formed from the amalgamation of two schools in 1998)

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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22330	Mr L Lewin	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed
8971	Mrs J Hesslewood	Lay inspector		How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with the parents
17263	Mr A Bond	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Physical education	
22856	Mrs K Campbell	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Music	Special educational needs
22352	Mrs F Gaywood	Team inspector	Art and design Religious education	The quality of the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils Equal opportunities
27369	Mrs C Powell	Team inspector	Science Geography	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
18342	Mrs M Spark	Team inspector	English History	English as an additional language

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Leighswood Primary School is situated in Aldridge on the eastern side of the borough of Walsall. The school opened in September 1998, following the amalgamation of Leighswood Infant and Leighswood Junior Schools. The site is comprised of two main buildings, separated by a short walkway. The school has extensive grounds. There are 534 pupils on roll, taught in 16 classes by 25 teachers, five of who are part-time. The school also has a Nursery that caters for 78 children who attend on a part-time basis, either in the morning or afternoon. Children are admitted to the nursery on a part-time basis during the autumn term of the academic year in which they are four. They are admitted to the reception classes at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five. Pupils come from a diversity of backgrounds; most come from the school's immediate catchment area, but 30 per cent of pupils come from outside this area. Four per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds, mainly Black Caribbean, Indian, Bangladeshi, and Chinese and, of these, six pupils, around one per cent, speak English as an additional language, which is a bit higher than in most schools. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, at ten per cent, is below average. There are 19 per cent of pupils who have special educational needs, which is close to the national average and three pupils have a Statement of special educational needs. Children beginning school show broadly average attainment. The school has recently received the Investors in People Award.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. It is very well led and managed, and good teaching enables pupils to achieve well in many subjects by the end of Key Stage 2. Staff and governors work closely together and are committed to developing the school as fully as possible. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average in English, information and communication technology, history and physical education. In art, standards are above average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Children achieve well by the time they leave the reception year.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are good.
- Teaching and curricular provision for children in the Foundation Stage¹ is very good, and teaching at Key Stage 2 is good.
- Very good provision is made for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The headteacher provides very strong leadership and management, and staff work together as a highly effective team.
- The very active and well-informed governing body provides strong support for the headteacher and staff.
- The school has established strong links with the parents and the community.

What could be improved

- The roles of some subject co-ordinators are not yet fully developed.
- The accommodation for pupils in upper Key Stage 2 is cramped.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the first inspection of the school since it opened in September 1998.

¹ The Foundation Stage applies to children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	N/A	A	B	A	very high A* well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E very low E*
Mathematics	N/A	C	C	C	
Science	N/A	C	C	C	

In the National Curriculum tests in 2000, taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, results were above average in English when compared with schools nationally and well above average when compared with similar schools². Results in mathematics and science were average, when compared nationally and with similar schools. Inspection evidence confirms that these standards are being reached by the pupils currently in Year 6. The school's results broadly reflect the national trend of improvement over the last two years. Standards are above average in information and communication technology, art, history and physical education by the end of Key Stage 2. Musically talented pupils achieve particularly well at Key Stage 2. In all other subjects, pupils attain average standards.

In the National Curriculum tests in 2000, taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, results were average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. Pupils currently in Year 2 are achieving satisfactorily in all subjects and attaining above expectations in art.

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well and, by the time they leave the reception year, most will have exceeded the expected level of attainment for their age in all areas of learning.

Prior to the inspection, the school had rightly identified writing standards at Key Stage 1 and mathematics across the school as being in need of further development. Effective strategies have been put in place and there are clear signs that these are beginning to have a positive impact in these areas.

Overall, all different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. The school has a rigorous approach towards setting challenging targets for pupils' performance and is successful in working towards the achievement of these goals.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Almost all pupils have positive attitudes to school. They are enthusiastic and eager to progress in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are courteous and well mannered. They move about the school sensibly and work purposefully during lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils are friendly and communicative. They get on well with one another and the adults who work with them.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils are punctual and lessons run on time.

² 'Similar schools' are defined by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals; this measure has been found to be significantly related to the levels of attainment normally found in schools nationally.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Of the lessons observed, 96 per cent were satisfactory or better, 73 per cent were good or better, 23 were very good or better and four per cent were unsatisfactory.

Overall, the standard of teaching in nursery and reception classes is consistently high; over half of the lessons observed were very good. The teaching and support staff have very secure knowledge of this age group and work very closely together to ensure a good balance of activities that are well structured and purposeful.

The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is sound overall, with good teaching noted in mathematics, information and communication technology and religious education. At Key Stage 2, teaching is good overall, and in science it is satisfactory. The teaching of literacy skills is sound at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Numeracy skills are taught well at both key stages. In many of the good and very good lessons, teachers show an enthusiastic approach, set high expectations, and provide challenging tasks that extend pupils' thinking and accelerate their progress in learning. The school's application of additional literacy support sessions and setting by ability, for both English and mathematics lessons at Key Stage 2, is clearly beneficial in promoting pupils' learning, and provides a strong basis for raising standards further in the future. Classroom support staff provide very valuable backup for the teachers and support, monitor and guide pupils' work very effectively. In a very small number of lessons, the work set does not match pupils' levels of attainment precisely enough, or the pace of learning is too slow. Some teachers lack confidence in teaching investigative science. Teachers ensure that the needs of all different groups of pupils are met as fully as possible. There is a good level of support for pupils with special educational needs, particularly during literacy lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. A broad and relevant curriculum is provided for all age groups. Very good curricular provision is made for children in the Foundation Stage. The school has a good programme of extra-curricular activities for pupils at Key Stage 2 and has established strong links with the local community that significantly enhance pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. Provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is very good. Support staff make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, particularly during literacy lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good provision is made to ensure these pupils are fully supported.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and a strength of the school. Acts of collective worship are important communal occasions. They make a strong contribution to pupils' all-round development. The school promotes social and cultural development particularly well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. The school provides a caring and supportive environment. Comprehensive systems are in place to assess pupils' attainment and progress.

Parents are kept very well informed. A strong partnership is maintained between home and school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very strong leadership and management, and staff work together as an effective team. She is well supported in the role by her deputy headteacher and other members of the senior management team. The roles of some of the subject co-ordinators are not yet fully developed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors carry out their responsibilities very well. They are very active and well informed, and provide strong support for the headteacher and staff. They are fully involved in the management of the school and fulfil all of their statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher has established very effective systems to monitor the curriculum and teaching and learning, particularly for English and mathematics. Some subject co-ordinators are not sufficiently involved in monitoring teaching and learning. Many governors visit the school regularly and, in addition, they are kept fully informed about the outcomes of the school's monitoring activities.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very good use of its funding to target educational priorities. There is a clear link between the school's spending and the development of identified targets in the school improvement plan. The headteacher is particularly skilful in seeking out additional grants. All costs are carefully considered to ensure that the school gets the best value from all spending.

The school has sufficient teaching staff. All staff, including administrative staff and lunchtime supervisory staff, have received a wide range of in-service training. The accommodation is very good at Key Stage 1 with airy, bright and spacious classrooms. The school has extensive attractive grounds with good facilities for outdoor education. The classroom accommodation is cramped for pupils in upper Key Stage 2. The resources to support pupils' learning are good in nearly all subjects.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Overall the parents feel this is a good school. In particular they feel that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school is well led and managed; the school sets high expectations for the pupils; staff are approachable; teaching is good; their children like school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A small minority of parents do not agree that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors agree with the very positive views expressed by parents. Inspectors find that a good range of extra-curricular activities is provided for pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children's attainment on entry to nursery is broadly average, though wide-ranging. Most children have sound speaking, listening and early reading skills. Early writing and mathematical skills are adequate, although not as well developed. Children in the nursery make very good progress, particularly in personal and social development, and most enter the reception classes with secure basic early language, literacy and numeracy skills. The children currently in reception are achieving very well and most are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals³ set for this age group by the time they move into Year 1.
2. The results of the National Curriculum tests, in 2000, taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, showed that standards were average in reading and writing when compared with schools nationally. When compared with similar schools, pupils' achievements were average for reading, but below average in writing. In mathematics, pupils' results in 2000 were below average, when compared both nationally and with similar schools. In science, teachers' assessments, in 2000, showed that pupils' achievements were average.
3. The results of the National Curriculum tests, in 2000, taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 were above average in English, when compared with schools nationally and well above average when compared with similar schools. In mathematics and science, pupils' achievements were average, when compared with schools nationally and with similar schools. Pupils' results in these subjects broadly reflect the national trend of improvement over the last two years.
4. Inspection findings mirror the most recent National Curriculum results in English, mathematics and science. The school has a rigorous approach towards setting challenging targets for pupils' performance and is successful in working towards the achievement of these. The inspection found that measures taken by the school, since amalgamation, to raise standards further in English, in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, are beginning to have a positive impact on attainment, however, this is not yet fully reflected in test results at the end of Key Stage 1.
5. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' skills in speaking and listening are above those expected nationally. Their achievement in reading and writing is average. In Year 2, pupils speak in clear sentences and many have an extensive vocabulary, which allows them to articulate their ideas very effectively. Most pupils use their knowledge of phonics and picture cues appropriately to work out unfamiliar words. Pupils write for a range of purposes to support work across the curriculum. Most pupils know that sentences have capital letters and full stops, but not all transfer this knowledge into their everyday writing. Handwriting varies from well-formed letters that are consistent in size and appropriately spaced, to poorly formed letters with no spaces between the words.
6. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain speaking and listening skills that are well above average, and their reading and writing skills are above average. In Year 6, pupils show good ability in dramatic presentation in literacy lessons, and on other occasions, such as class assemblies. Most pupils are expressive and responsive readers. They have a good sense of audience and adapt their writing for many different purposes. Most pupils use expressive, descriptive language very effectively. They use their literacy skills very effectively in other subjects, often demonstrating well-developed skills to research for information through use of the Internet, CD-ROMs or library facilities.
7. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented very effectively and is having a positive effect upon raising standards.

³ The Early Learning Goals set out what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of the reception year in primary school.

8. At Key Stage 1, standards in mathematics are now rising and, for the pupils currently in Year 2, attainment is broadly average. A greater percentage of pupils now achieve higher levels of performance and a smaller percentage work at a below average level. In Year 2, all pupils have a sound understanding of place value, identifying hundreds, tens and units digits in numbers. Most pupils are confident when counting in twos, fives and tens. Most pupils have a sound knowledge of two- and three-dimensional shapes and show a satisfactory ability to work with problem-solving activities.
9. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are also attaining average standards, but there is evidence that higher-attaining pupils are achieving better, and this is likely to improve test results marginally in 2001, but more significantly in 2002. Pupils in Year 6 use their multiplication tables confidently and know how to invert multiplication statements into division. The vast majority of pupils in this year group convert mixed numbers to improper fractions and answer questions involving fractions of whole numbers, drawing successfully on their knowledge of division. Pupils generally have a secure knowledge of area and perimeter and how to measure angles accurately using a protractor. They work well with problem-solving activities and successfully use and interpret data-handling information to help them in this respect.
10. The school has a clear focus on raising standards in mathematics and has implemented a number of strategies that are beginning to take root. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented very effectively and is having a positive impact on standards in mathematics. However, the most significant factors in raising standards have been the close match of work to pupils' ability levels in groups and sets, and the higher expectations that teachers now have of pupils' performance.
11. In science pupils are achieving standards appropriate for their age at the end of both key stages. In Year 2, pupils are familiar with the process of predicting and 'finding out' in scientific terms. They carry out suitable investigations and record their conclusions, however, they do not yet understand the meaning of a 'fair test'. Pupils accurately identify the parts of a plant, know about the conditions required for its growth, and understand the basic ideas about a plant's life cycle. They describe the properties of some materials as 'smooth', 'soft' and 'rough', but display limited understanding of how materials can be changed. Pupils have appropriate knowledge of physical processes, for example in relation to light sources. In Year 6, pupils collect information and record their results effectively, by drawing tables, diagrams and graphs. They present their work well, using appropriate scientific vocabulary, and have a clear understanding of the principle of 'making a fair test'. Pupils display an appropriate breadth of knowledge about physical processes, with most using a good range of scientific terminology in their explanations of physical phenomena.
12. In art and design, pupils achieve standards which are above those expected by the end of both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils confidently explore and share a range of interesting artistic ideas and use a range of materials to design and create good quality artwork. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use a wide range of media sensitively and carefully, with increasing skill and maturity.
13. Pupils' attainment in design and technology is as expected for their age, by the end of both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils show sound skills with designing and making, and evaluate their work thoroughly, making suggestions as to how it could have been improved. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good knowledge of the processes involved in design and technology, use their skills well, taking care with assembling their products, and finishing off their work neatly.
14. In geography, pupils achieve standards appropriate to their age at the end of both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils draw comparisons between their own environment and other environments by comparing natural and man-made features. Pupils at Key Stage 2 acquire appropriate knowledge about a range of countries and areas in their studies and develop a sound understanding of appropriate geographical terms, for example, referring to 'erosion' and 'the environment' in the correct context.

15. Pupils attain standards appropriate to their age in history by the end of Key Stage 1 and higher than expected standards by the end of Key Stage 2. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a sound knowledge of famous people in history. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils gain a clear understanding of events or circumstances that brought about changes to their locality, through careful investigations of old maps and photographs. Pupils develop a good understanding about historical characters and situations and produce good-quality, expressive writing.
16. In information and communication technology, pupils attain standards in line with expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. The use of computers, over a wide range of activities, at Key Stage 2, enables pupils to attain standards above expectations by the end of the key stage. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know how to use information and communication technology to organise and classify information and present their findings. They gain an awareness of using computers to generate information for a specific audience, and most pupils show confident ability to use the mouse and keyboard. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make particularly effective use of information and communication technology in literacy and numeracy and show an ease of familiarity with using the facilities to enhance their work in these areas. They research topics on the Internet, visiting a range of different web sites to find answers for the questions they have devised and show confident ability to cut and paste information they have discovered into other programs. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils show a good knowledge of the benefits of using the Internet. They have experience of using e-mail facilities to communicate with pupils in other schools, and this provides them with much impetus for extending their literacy skills to communicate in this way. Throughout the school, but especially at Key Stage 2, good use is made of information and communication technology to support work in other subjects with for example, research work in history, geography and science, data-handling in connection with mathematics, exploration and experimentation with art programs and frequent extension of literacy work.
17. In music, pupils attain standards appropriate for their age by the end of both key stages, with musically talented pupils achieving even higher levels. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen, in a focused way, to a variety of music. They know the names of familiar percussion instruments; they play simple rhythms and are aware of high and low sounds. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils of all abilities show good listening skills. They understand chord patterns, note values and rhythms. In assemblies, pupils' instrumental ensembles display good musicianship and a mature sense of performance.
18. Standards in physical education are in line with expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and are above expectations at the end of Key Stage 2, especially in games, swimming and athletics. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils develop appropriate skills of striking and throwing in games lessons. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils demonstrate good techniques in football and netball when catching, throwing or kicking a ball. Pupils achieve high levels of performance in swimming, with many swimming long distances. In gymnastics, pupils demonstrate good levels of control on the apparatus, landing with precision.
19. Pupils' standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils gain an appropriate range of religious knowledge for example, through studying the Moslem faith alongside their ideas of Christianity. They study Christian festivals and know why these are special. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know, and understand well, some of the practices and customs of people of other faiths and have identified some similarities and differences between religions.
20. Overall, all different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall and are supported very well by high quality support staff. Pupils with a Statement of special educational needs make very good progress. Other pupils with special needs make best progress during group work in literacy lessons, when work is carefully matched to their needs and support is well targeted. The school has started to identify its gifted and talented pupils, but it is too early to assess the impact of this initiative on standards. The school has a very small number of pupils on roll receiving support with English as an additional language, but, as these pupils were not present at the time of the inspection, it is not possible to judge their levels of attainment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

21. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are good. Pupils are well behaved, polite and courteous. Overall, parents agree that behaviour is good, and most parents agree that that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.
22. Children in the Foundation Stage develop confidently, within a totally secure learning environment. There are very strong relationships between adults and children. Behaviour is very good and children enjoy their time in school and demonstrate impressive levels of independence.
23. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, almost all pupils have positive attitudes to school. Many are eager to make progress in their lessons, for example, making lively contributions in their oral and mental mathematics. Older pupils respond well to challenges, such as being asked to complete a task in a given time or work with a partner to solve a problem. Most try hard and work with good concentration. Constructive attitudes and consideration for others are well demonstrated by the positive spirit with which pupils participate in group activities, for example, with the Gazebo theatre, and games in physical education. Many take full advantage of extra opportunities provided for them, for example, by attending the environmental club or taking part in extra-curricular activities, including the many visits provided. Team games are popular and well attended.
24. Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils are invariably courteous and well mannered. In most lessons, there is a prompt response to questions and instructions, and pupils work quietly and purposefully. They can be trusted to handle equipment responsibly in practical sessions, such as science, art and design and technology. The pupils move around the school sensibly, for example, entering the hall quietly at the start of assembly. On occasions when the teacher is not firm enough, however, some are capable of becoming noisy and distracted. This was seen once or twice during the inspection. From the nursery onwards, the pupils play constructively together outside. Older pupils play in a friendly way during breaks, only occasionally becoming boisterous. Inspectors found no indications of bullying, and there have been no recent exclusions.
25. Relationships are good throughout the school. The pupils are friendly and communicative with staff and visitors, and they mostly like and respect their teachers. They get on well with one another working together well in classroom tasks, or working independently on their own initiative. Pairs of pupils work well together when sharing machines in the computer suite. Older pupils give their time to the younger ones, for example, when planning to make jigsaws in their design and technology lessons. The school is developing as a community, encouraged by the whole-school assemblies and certificates and awards presented to pupils. All these opportunities contribute to the pupils' good personal development.
26. All different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well integrated into school life. They are valued and respected.
27. Pupils' attendance rate is well above the national average. Levels of unauthorised absence are well below the national average. Absence recorded as unauthorised is as a result of parents taking pupils on holiday during term-time for more than the permitted ten days. Pupils are punctual, and lessons begin on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

28. Of the lessons observed, 96 per cent were satisfactory or better, 73 per cent were good or better, 23 were very good or better and four per cent were unsatisfactory.
29. The standard of teaching in nursery and reception classes is consistently high overall. Over half of lessons observed were very good. The teaching and support staff display enthusiasm and commitment. They have very secure knowledge of this age group and work very closely together to ensure a good balance of activities that are well structured and purposeful. Planning is thorough, and evaluations of lessons are detailed and informative. In reception classes, teachers encourage

the development of independent reading and writing skills very effectively. Children's work is attractively displayed, and working areas are well organised. Teachers' record keeping is impressive, throughout the Foundation Stage, and homework provides very good opportunity for parents and children to work together on a lively and interesting range of activities.

30. Overall, teaching at Key Stage 1 is sound, with good teaching noted in mathematics, information and communication technology and religious education. At Key Stage 2, teaching is good overall, but with satisfactory teaching noted in science.
31. The quality of teaching in English is sound at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and use it well in planning their lessons so that work is generally matched well to pupils' levels of attainment. The strength of the teaching at Key Stage 2 is based upon confident subject knowledge, and a particularly enthusiastic approach in many of the lessons, which results in pupils working in a well-motivated fashion. Mathematics is taught well at both key stages, with particularly effective teaching of calculation skills. The teachers' good questioning techniques in the mental/oral parts of numeracy lessons help these sessions to run at a good pace. The style and approach of the National Numeracy Strategy is now well established across the school, and teachers use the framework very effectively to plan their lessons.
32. Overall, teachers plan their lessons carefully with tasks that are interesting and usually matched well to pupils' levels of attainment. In the good and very good lessons, this helps pupils to progress rapidly with the tasks they are given. Learning objectives are clearly set within planning and carefully explained to pupils so that they usually know exactly what to do. Particularly good emphasis is placed upon establishing links between subject areas where possible, and especially good examples were noted at Key Stage 2 where, in this way, pupils gained a broader view of literacy, for example, by pursuing areas of work during information and communication technology lessons.
33. Teachers at both key stages show confident subject knowledge in most subjects. However, this was especially apparent at Key Stage 2, where, in many of the good and very good lessons, this confidence led to a very enthusiastic approach by the teachers, to which the pupils responded well by working in a very enthusiastic manner themselves. This confidence also led to the teachers setting expectations high and challenging pupils with tasks that extended their thinking and provoked good levels of interaction and collaboration. For example, in a very good mathematics lesson in Year 5, the teacher asked a pupil to explain his methods of calculation to the class and this resulted in good discussion work and a comparing of approaches. Similarly, the teacher's enthusiasm in an excellent art lesson at Key Stage 1 also engendered a very motivated approach by pupils to produce good quality work. At both key stages, teachers generally show confidence in teaching information and communication technology and, as a result, their explanations are clear and succinct and enable pupils to get on rapidly with the tasks set. At Key Stage 2, the music specialist's expert knowledge enables good teaching, where the pupils experience a wide range of musical activities to promote their learning. At Key Stage 1, individual class teachers provide satisfactory teaching in music and provide worthwhile activities for their pupils. However, they are less confident in their subject knowledge, so that they do not always recognise, for example, that pupils are not singing the correct melody for a song being taught. Another good example of knowledgeable and enthusiastic teaching at Key Stage 2 was noted in a very good history lesson in Year 5 about the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb. Through her skilful story-telling, the teacher successfully inspired the pupils so that they were very keen to promote their learning through role-play of the characters in the story, and this resulted in good quality writing about the events.
34. Another strong point of teaching is the school's application of additional literacy support sessions and the setting of pupils by ability, both for English and mathematics lessons at Key Stage 2. This organisational strategy is clearly beneficial in promoting pupils' learning, giving enhanced opportunities for teachers to tailor work more specifically to the needs of different groups of pupils and improving the provision for monitoring and guiding individuals during lessons. These strategies provide strong potential for the school to raise standards further in the future.

35. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and manage them very effectively at both key stages. This means that not only do pupils generally behave well and pay attention during lessons, but they are also encouraged to try hard with different activities. This was noted, for example, in physical education lessons at both key stages where, because of the confidence instilled in them, pupils were keen to participate.
36. Teachers often use resources well to promote good learning. For example, in a good mathematics lesson in Year 2, the use of a giant dice and a cloth bag of cubes passed amongst pupils, successfully promoted pupils' interest, involvement and progress. In a few information and communication technology lessons at Key Stage 2, the good use of the computer projector enabled the teachers to rapidly and clearly demonstrate to pupils how to use program facilities. This meant pupils were able to move ahead with their individual tasks at a good pace.
37. Classroom support staff provide very valuable backup for the teachers and widen the opportunities to support, monitor and guide pupils' work. They are well briefed and work closely with teachers. Support is further enhanced by a good team of parent helpers and governors who come in to assist in lessons.
38. The very few lessons which were unsuccessful, or where particular weaknesses were apparent, were often due to the work set not matching pupils' levels of attainment precisely enough. On such occasions, where tasks were too difficult, pupils needed extra support, which, in turn, led to the teacher being distracted, for example, from working with a particular group of pupils. Very occasionally, where a teacher lacked confidence, or was hesitant with an explanation, the pace of learning became too slow. On a few occasions, the whole-class sessions at the end of mathematics lessons were not fully utilised to consolidate new learning that had taken place. Some teachers lack confidence in teaching investigative science, and this was apparent with lessons that tended to be too directed and lacking in opportunities for pupils to explore ideas for themselves.
39. The marking of pupils' work is generally sound. Where it is good, teachers write comments to aid future progress. On a few occasions, marking is less detailed and work is only ticked.
40. Teachers regularly assess their pupils and make good use of the information gained to help them with the next steps in their planning.
41. Inspection evidence, together with conversations with pupils and discussions with parents show that teachers provide pupils with appropriate homework. The homework is provided on a regular basis and is well organised, particularly at Key Stage 2.
42. There is a good level of support for pupils with special educational needs, particularly during literacy lessons. In the best lessons, planning for these pupils is well thought through and linked effectively to their individual education plans. However, provision by class teachers is not completely consistent throughout the school. Most teachers address the needs of pupils of all abilities well, but there are occasions when planning does not focus sufficiently on the individual targets of pupils with special educational needs.

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

43. The school provides a broad, relevant curriculum, of good quality, for all age groups. However, there is some imbalance in the timing and length of science sessions, in both key stages, which causes some lessons to flag because they are too long, or carried over after a break. Also, where subjects are planned to run consecutively, there are sometimes long gaps before pupils meet them again. For instance, in art and design, when it alternates with design and technology, or history when it alternates with geography. This means that learning is not always a continuous process. Overall, the range of learning opportunities is wide enough to support pupils' academic and personal development and appropriate time is allocated to ensure all elements of the National Curriculum are covered, including religious education. This has been achieved effectively, in part, by developing clear links between subjects, such as history, religious education and art, for

example in Year 5. These links have a positive impact on the development of pupils' skills in many areas of learning.

44. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Opportunities for older pupils to participate in sporting and musical activities are very good. Free musical tuition for woodwind, strings and brass is provided, together with opportunities for paid tuition in guitar and the French language. Popular activities include chess, cross-country running, netball and football coaching and matches, drama and environmental clubs. An over-subscribed 'before and after-school care club' provides good-quality care and activities for all ages. Pupils of all ages benefit from a full range of visits linked to areas of the curriculum, which are used effectively to enhance pupils' personal and academic development.
45. Curricular provision for children in the Foundation Stage, both in the nursery and reception, is matched very well to the six areas of learning for this age group. Children are provided with a wide range of high-quality and fun learning experiences. The school is in the process of developing a new Foundation Stage policy.
46. The curriculum is relevant to pupils with special educational needs and requirements of the Code of Practice are fully met. The school is awaiting new government initiatives before updating its special needs' policy. All pupils on the special needs' register have very precise individual education plans with clear, realistic targets for improvement that are reviewed and updated regularly. These plans are generally used well, but, occasionally, teachers do not pay enough attention to catering for the needs of pupils' individual targets in their overall lesson planning.
47. Documentation is well maintained by all staff who support pupils with special needs. It is high quality, detailed and informative. In general, arrangements for the withdrawal of pupils for extra support are satisfactory. They take careful account of pupils' entitlement to the full curriculum. However, there are isolated incidents of pupils missing favourite lessons and teachers not explaining work sufficiently well when pupils return to the class.
48. The school has effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy, and these initiatives are beginning to have a positive impact on standards. Pupils have good opportunities to do pieces of extended writing, and literacy and numeracy are linked well to other subjects of the curriculum.
49. The school plans well to include all its pupils. All different groups of pupils are catered for equally well.
50. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, which consistently provides pupils with the knowledge upon which to make informed decisions. Besides discussions during lessons, 'circle time'⁴, and religious education lessons provide pupils with good opportunities to consider feelings and behaviour. Problems and incidents are talked through carefully and sensitively. Pupils also take responsibility for organising fund-raising activities and, when entrusted with a job, for instance, in the libraries, they make sure it is carried out without reminders. They also help teachers at lunchtimes, and older pupils have opportunities to look after younger ones on the playground. The governors have an appropriate agreed policy for sex education, and the nurse runs suitable classes for pupils in Year 6 covering this area. Issues of health and diet are appropriately covered in science lessons, and the importance of exercise is also stressed in physical education. Pupils in Year 2 have a session with a visiting teacher who talks to them, appropriately, about themselves and safe medicines, through activities, drama and stories. The development of good relationships and consideration for others is established in the life and work of the school. Pupils go on various outings and the older ones have the chance to attend residential courses, which are designed to foster personal development, as well as to enhance learning in particular subjects.

⁴ Circle time is an activity where pupils are able to discuss certain matters as a class, following strict rules about listening to others and taking turns to speak.

51. The local community makes a very significant contribution to pupils' learning. For example, a local company contributes to fund-raising efforts and supports the 'books and beyond' initiative. Pupils also visit a local company for a design and technology day. Pupils are actively involved in environmental projects; they collect aluminium cans for re-cycling and support numerous charitable causes. Teachers from the local education authority outdoor centre visit the school. An e-mail link is established with a school in Cannock. Pupils take part in many inter-school sports competitions, enhancing their personal and social education.
52. Very constructive relationships are fostered with the local secondary school to which most pupils move at the end of Year 6. Both schools work hard to make and maintain links at every level. Initiatives include a technology day at the secondary school for pupils in Year 5 and an induction day for Year 6 to help them become acquainted with future routines. Pupils also benefit from sports coaching by secondary school physical education teachers. There is a good link with the school's literacy governor who is an English teacher at the secondary school. Also, newly-qualified secondary teachers are encouraged to visit and even teach a session in order better to understand the pupils in the primary phase. Transfer documents are carefully considered, and work is underway on a new 'bridging profile' system, already working in mathematics. The secondary school is very grateful for the information and support it gets from the primary school, and they, in turn, are happy with the ways in which their pupils are supported into the next stage of their school lives.
53. Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is good. Pupils are helped to gain a clear understanding of their own and other people's lives, beliefs and feelings, not only through religious education, but also through activities such as geographical research and residential visits. The opportunity to participate in high-quality performances also provides pupils with further experience and breadth of knowledge. Evidence, taken from a video, of last year's high-profile production of 'An Audience with JC', captured a deeply moving moment when a pupil from Leighswood sang 'Were you there when they crucified my Lord?'
54. Acts of collective worship are important positive occasions that bring the school community together. They make a strong contribution towards pupils' all-round development.
55. Provision for pupils' moral development is also good. Pupils of all ages distinguish very clearly between right and wrong. The school's positive approach and its effective use of awards and celebration assemblies promote good attitudes and behaviour very effectively. The home-school agreement also provides a secure framework of expectations for pupils, staff and parents. Rewards and sanctions are known to all, and teachers generally make constructive use of praise.
56. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils undertake an increasingly wide range of responsibilities in the classroom and around school. The school uses interesting and effective ways of promoting pupils' social development. For example, its 'Playground Team' operates at different times of the year to provide appropriate levels of support for class members who are experiencing difficulties in the playground.
57. A large number of older pupils have numerous opportunities to take part in activities such as school clubs, high-quality class assemblies and competitions. Recent events include four and six-a-side football competitions, a chess contest, a mathematics challenge, and the Black Country Primary Schools' Cross-Country Championship.
58. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Pupils gain valuable knowledge about other beliefs in their study of world religions. They use art, music and poetry of other cultures effectively to develop deeper understanding. Visits of cultural interest to, for instance, a Mosque, the Royal Shakespeare Company, or a performance of 'The Nutcracker' ballet, are very strong features. The school offers pupils ample opportunity to develop secure understanding of other cultures in preparation for life in a multi-cultural world.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

59. The school provides a good standard of care for its pupils. All staff, working together as a team, providing a supportive and caring environment that successfully promotes the welfare, academic progress and self-esteem of all pupils. As a consequence, pupils feel secure, happy and valued, and this makes a positive contribution to the quality of their attitudes and behaviour around the school.
60. Consistent and familiar school routines create a secure learning environment. Good academic and pastoral links with the receiving secondary schools benefit both pupils and teachers. Induction procedures for pupils entering the nursery are good. The 'Before and After School Care Club' provides high-quality childcare. This good feature is highly valued by parents and carers and exemplifies the school's caring attitude for pupils and their families. It is over-subscribed and has a waiting list. The club's care manager is also employed in the school and this helps provide very good continuity of care.
61. Staff and governors are vigilant in promoting and monitoring the health and safety of pupils in school and on trips. The comprehensive health and safety policy covers all aspects of school organisation well. Training in health and safety and welfare issues for all staff is undertaken regularly. A good policy on the use of restraint has been developed. Risk assessments are undertaken regularly. Fire drills are carried each term. Access by visitors is carefully monitored. Advice on safety issues is regularly reinforced in physical education lessons. There is good quality supervision during the lunchbreak. Careful consideration and appropriate care is taken of pupils with specific medical or physical needs. All known bumps to the head are taken seriously, recorded and reported to parents. Good care is taken if pupils become ill in school.
62. The headteacher, who is the designated named person for child protection issues, knows each child and their family well. The school follows local child protection procedures and has developed a comprehensive child protection policy with very good practical guidance. Staff are aware of and have had training in what to do if child protection issues arise. The school has good links with social services and other welfare agencies. Lessons and assemblies form part of an overall strategy to teach pupils to look after themselves and to value their achievements and growing independence. The Internet access policy is reviewed regularly, and a letter outlining the school's approach to this area is sent to parents. There are good guidelines and procedures for the staff to follow in order to minimise and deal with any known incidents of bullying or harassment.
63. The importance of regular attendance and punctuality is promoted very well. When reasons for absence are not provided by parents, the school quickly issues a letter requesting the information. Pupils' attendance is monitored very well. All requests for leave of absence for holidays are carefully monitored and recorded by the headteacher. Pupils are involved effectively in monitoring the daily attendance of their class through practical application of their numeracy skills. Full attendance each term is marked by awarding certificates.
64. The school's approach to promoting good behaviour is well grounded in the effective use of praise. The amalgamation of the previous junior and infant schools required the merging of two separate approaches to promoting good behaviour. The current policy and procedures were developed in conjunction with all staff, parents and pupils and form an effective mechanism for monitoring and promoting good behaviour throughout the school. Pupils respond very positively when achievement and good behaviour are rewarded incrementally, for example by 'the marbles in the jar' technique, or collecting team points. Although there are slight differences in rewards and consequences between year groups, the promotion of self-discipline and personal responsibility is effectively and consistently encouraged by all staff.
65. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Staff know their pupils well and find time to give individual attention to personal difficulties when needed. Individual profiles are compiled as pupils move through the school, building a picture of year, class, group and individual achievements. Personal and social development is recorded, together with pupils' strengths and talents. The school values pupils as individuals. It uses opportunities in assemblies to demonstrate and acknowledge pupils' personal achievements well, thus raising their confidence and self-esteem. However, the school does not involve pupils fully in setting their own targets for improvement.

66. The school has a comprehensive, wide-ranging and thorough system for assessing the attainment and progress of pupils. As pupils progress through the school, national and optional tests results, reading test results, and teachers' assessments are carefully recorded and analysed in order to keep individuals and groups on target. For instance, a current year group was noted, from the baseline test, as requiring further assistance and is now receiving additional literacy support. These procedures are effective in recording significant deviation from expectations in English and mathematics from week to week, and the new standardised form is helping to create consistency throughout the school. The governors have a very active, knowledgeable sub-committee for targets and standards and receive regular reports from the assessment co-ordinator.
67. Procedures for the assessment and review of pupils with special educational needs are very secure. Baseline assessment information is used effectively to ensure the early identification of pupils with learning difficulties and to set targets for future development. The school has recently started to identify its gifted and talented pupils and this forms a useful basis for increasing further the precision of target setting for these pupils in the future.
68. The assessment co-ordinator is highly skilled and is an audit moderator for the local education authority. She holds regular meetings with subject co-ordinators and leads staff in moderation sessions so teachers in both key stages understand each other's assessments. Analysis also takes place by gender and ethnicity, and suitable action is taken where necessary, for example, by providing new resources for boys' reading.
69. The tracking system is very good and helps to detail pupils' individual performance. Targets are then set and usefully shared with the parents at parents' evenings. Whilst some targets are shared with pupils, and are placed in the front of books, they are insufficiently used at an individual level to enable pupils to self-evaluate and begin to take responsibility for their own learning. Procedures for monitoring personal development are informal, but effective, and help to form the basis of report writing. Teachers know their pupils well, and the personal profile builds as the pupils move through the school. At present, work is usefully being undertaken with the local secondary school to decide which are the most effective parts of this profile to pass on for future reference.
70. Procedures to assess children's various stages of development on entry to the nursery and reception are firmly established. They are completed during children's first term and results are used very effectively to plan future work, set individual targets for development and identify children who may have learning difficulties. The information is also used to predict standards children should achieve by the age of seven. Follow-up assessments are completed during the summer term to show children's rate of learning over the year. Although reception teachers keep valuable evidence of previous work, this practice is not yet developed in the nursery. Within the school's current improvement plan, the need to build up a more cohesive profile of children's development throughout the whole Foundation Stage has already been identified as an area for development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

71. As expressed through the parents' meeting and questionnaire, the parents' views of the school are positive. They feel the school is well led and managed, the teaching is good and that staff have high expectations of the pupils. Their children like school and they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. Homework is thought to fit pupils' needs. Parents at the meeting praised the good range of extra-curricular activities. However, responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire indicate that a few parents feel that the school does not provide a suitable range of activities outside lessons. The inspection team, however, feel that the school provides a good variety of extra-curricular activities.
72. The school works hard to achieve its very effective links with parents. Teachers are available to talk to parents at the end of the school day. Close liaison between the Before and After School Care Club's staff and teachers ensures that effective communication is maintained between parents who use the service and the school. Parents are invited to special and class assemblies, curriculum information evenings, and other celebratory events. Younger children are welcomed to the dress rehearsal of school performances and crèche facilities are available for the actual

performance. This is a good feature, giving parents the opportunity to focus on the achievements of the child who is taking part. Parents are provided with very good quality information about the school and its work. The governors' report to parents, with its comprehensive profiles on governors, and its good explanations of the comparative data regarding the end of key stage national test results, communicates the governing body's work to parents very effectively and in an easy-to-read format. A weekly newsletter keeps parents up to date about events and achievements. Information on the curriculum and proposed trips is shared each term. This allows parents to budget for trips and prepare effectively for any help needed with homework projects. Information to parents and carers, through written reports is very good, making clear what pupils know and can do and what they need to do to improve. Useful parents' evenings are held each term. Flexible appointments are available and the school monitors parental attendance offering additional opportunities for parents to attend by providing crèche facilities. The school works together well with the parents of pupils with special medical or educational needs to ensure a consistent approach.

73. A strong partnership between home and school is at the heart of the school's philosophy. Staff in the Foundation Stage hold meetings to explain the school's approach to teaching reading and numeracy skills and how parents can help. The well thought out home-school agreement and homework policy were developed after consultation between school and parents. These useful documents, together with the school's annual survey of parents' views, underpin this partnership approach effectively.
74. Parental involvement in the work of the school has a very significant impact on the quality of education provided. Parents help with homework, listen to pupils read, encourage and support recycling projects and charitable appeals. Fund-raising and social events arranged by the very active and well-organised Parent Teachers Association, involving teachers, parents, pupils and the local community, enhance pupils' academic, personal and social education. For example, help from this direction has resulted in the provision of extra computers, the newly refurbished playground for younger pupils and the provision of other useful resources. This support enhances the school's capacity to improve pupils' skills and learning. In addition, a significant number of parents help in school and this enhances pupils' skills in areas such as reading and information and communication technology. The school provides very useful training courses for parents who help regularly in school to ensure they are confident of what is expected of them when supporting pupils. The most recent courses have trained parent helpers to support pupils effectively in the information technology suite. Parents also assist on trips, support the sports teams and help with transport.
75. Partnership with parents of children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Information is of a high quality, helpful and informative. Formal meetings, supplemented by home visits and a staged programme of accompanied and unaccompanied visits, prior to a child's admission, establish very strong links between home and school. Consequently, parents are supportive and make a very valuable contribution towards their children's learning.
76. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of progress and are invited to regular review meetings. They appreciate the work of the school and recognise its strong commitment to helping their children achieve their full potential. Links with outside agencies are very good.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

77. The headteacher shows very strong leadership and management skills. She creates an atmosphere in which the staff all feel valued and work together as a highly effective team. This has been the central point that has enabled the school to move forward rapidly over the last two years whilst addressing the complex issues surrounding the amalgamation of the two former schools. The headteacher has a very clear vision of the future educational direction of this newly-established school and skilfully involves all staff and governors in sharing and promoting this vision. The school is now in its third year since the amalgamation. The headteacher implemented many very effective systems and strategies to enable this amalgamation to run smoothly. Inevitably, many of the management systems, such as those to monitor teaching, learning and the curriculum, are relatively new and their impact is yet to be fully realised. Despite this, a strong level of consistency

and continuity of practice have already been established well, across the school, in a relatively short period of time.

78. Very clear lines of management have been established that result in the deputy headteacher and senior management team carrying out their roles very effectively in supporting the headteacher in implementing the school's improvement plan. Very good systems are in place to ensure effective communication and, through a wide range of regular meetings, all staff are kept fully informed and involved. The aims of the school are very clear and all staff work hard to achieve them.
79. Governors have a wide range of expertise and work in a very close supportive partnership with the staff. Many of them visit the school on a regular basis to assist in the classroom or monitor school activities. They are very thoroughly involved in discussing and considering the school's future direction and, through their own monitoring activities and through the very detailed headteacher's reports, they have a clear overview of the school's current effectiveness. The targets and standards sub-committee is particularly effective in this respect, keeping a very close scrutiny on the school's performance and considering ways in which it can be improved through setting realistic targets. This is an exemplary model of good practice that enables the governors to focus support within the school wherever it is most needed.
80. The headteacher has established very effective systems to monitor the curriculum and teaching and learning, particularly for English and mathematics, and outcomes of monitoring activities are usefully considered at regular meetings of the monitoring committee. Alongside the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators are centrally involved in these monitoring activities, but other subject co-ordinators are not sufficiently involved in monitoring teaching and learning and do not, therefore, have a complete overview of the quality of work across the school. In this way, the roles of the subject co-ordinators are under developed. In all other ways, they work hard to carry out their roles effectively.
81. Co-ordination of the Foundation Stage is very strong. The co-ordinator has a very clear sense of direction and has accurately identified areas for development.
82. The part-time co-ordinator for special needs supports teachers very well in the identification, assessment and review process. Liaison with support staff is good.
83. The school has moved forward rapidly and successfully to implement the government's initiatives concerning performance management. Prior to this, clear systems were already in place to fully support staff development and, these, now coupled with the newly introduced ones, mean that the school is in a very strong position to promote and enhance the staff's skills in the future. The extension of the performance management systems to cover the work of support staff is an example of the school's proactive approach towards seeking ways of improving the skills of all members of staff.
84. The school improvement plan is very clear, detailed and realistic. All staff and governors are involved in formulating actions for future development, as well as monitoring the success of initiatives that are currently underway. In this way, staff and governors show a very strong commitment towards developing the school further, and there is clearly a very good capacity to achieve goals that are set.
85. The school makes very good use of its funding to target educational priorities. There is a clear link between school spending and the development of identified targets in the school improvement plan. Educational initiatives are well supported with learning resources, appropriate classroom support and the creative use of existing accommodation. The headteacher is particularly skilful in seeking out additional grants that ultimately bring benefits to the school's facilities and raise pupils' performance.
86. The recommendations of the most recent audit report of July 1999 have been met. Good administrative and financial systems are in place. Clerical staff carry out their duties efficiently on a daily basis. They support the work of teachers and senior staff effectively through well-organised systems and routines. Good quality financial information is made available to the governors and

headteacher on a regular basis. This allows the governors to exercise their statutory monitoring role properly.

87. New technological equipment makes a very effective contribution to the life of the school. Up-to-date systems are in place for financial control and internal communication.
88. The school makes full use of all technology available both for administration purposes and for teaching and learning. There is good range of increasing expertise in this area amongst staff and a strong interest in utilising all new facilities as they become available to enhance the work of the school.
89. The governors and headteacher have a good understanding of the principles of best value. They ensure that consultation takes place before major decisions are made. Comparison is made between schools of a similar nature and social setting. School results are monitored closely, and careful analysis takes place before school targets are decided. Spending decisions are justified, and large levels of expenditure are subject to competitive tendering.
90. Given that the leadership and management are very good, that the overall quality of teaching is good, that children enter the school showing broadly average attainment and generally achieve well by the time they leave, the school provides good value for money.
91. There are sufficient teaching staff to meet the needs of the National Curriculum and they are appropriately deployed throughout the school. The school has good strategies in place for the professional development of staff and has recently received the 'Investors in People' award. This programme of staff development is well balanced between the needs of the individual teachers and the school's requirements. Performance management is dovetailed expertly into the school development plan. There is a sufficient number of non-teaching support staff. They are experienced and well qualified. All staff, including administration staff and lunchtime supervisory staff, as well as have received a wide range of in-service training.
92. Overall, the school's accommodation is satisfactory. The accommodation is very good at Key Stage 1, with airy, bright, and spacious classrooms. The school has extensive attractive grounds with good facilities for outdoor education. There are two good-sized hard-surface playgrounds and a separate safe and secure play area for children in the Foundation Stage. There are two attractive and well-stocked libraries, which are used well by pupils. The classrooms for the older pupils at Key Stage 2 are cramped, and this is impacting negatively upon the learning for these pupils, particularly in science. The whole of the school is kept very clean, and the learning environment is enhanced by very attractive, high-quality displays of pupils' work.
93. The resources to support pupils' learning are good in nearly all subjects. In most subject areas, there is an extensive range of classroom resources and centralised resources are stored well and are accessible. Resources are adequate in science, geography, and design and technology. The shortage of artefacts in history is made up for by loans from the Development Education Centre. Resources within the libraries are very good.
94. Accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage is spacious and attractive. In addition to good hard and grassed areas, the nursery outdoor play area has a large soft-landing section. There is an appropriate range of large outdoor play equipment and resources are of good quality.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

95. In order to improve the quality of education provided and the standards pupils achieve, the governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:
 - Develop the role of some subject co-ordinators further, by involving them in appropriate monitoring activities that give them a fuller view of standards of work, and how effectively the subject for which they are responsible is taught across the school. (*Paragraphs 80, 147, 154, 159, 163, 168, 183, 189,195*)

- Provide a better learning environment for pupils in upper Key Stage 2 by improving the accommodation. (*Paragraphs 92, 148, 158*)

The following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan:

- ensure that pupils who are withdrawn from lessons for extra support are always successfully reintegrated back into lessons when they return to class. (*Paragraphs 47, 174*)
- involve pupils more fully in the process of setting targets for their future performance. (*Paragraph 69*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	113
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	22	50	22	4	1	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)	35	534
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	45

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	102

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.4

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	41	23	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	36	35
	Girls	21	22	21
	Total	55	58	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (85)	91 (82)	88 (85)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	35	36
	Girls	22	21	20
	Total	56	56	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (84)	88 (93)	88 (96)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (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	37	34	71

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	30	25	29
	Girls	31	26	30
	Total	61	51	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (81)	72 (72)	83 (86)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	30	31	29
	Girls	31	26	30
	Total	61	57	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (76)	80 (81)	83 (82)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	1
White	405
Any other minority ethnic group	6

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	21
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.6
Average class size	29

Education support staff: Nursery – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	303

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	35

Total number of education support staff	2
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Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.7
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
	£
Total income	781,871
Total expenditure	825,116
Expenditure per pupil	1,625
Balance brought forward from previous year	113,000
Balance carried forward to next year	69,755

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	514
Number of questionnaires returned	188
Percentage of questionnaires returned	37

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	24	4	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	64	33	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	39	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	47	6	1	5
The teaching is good.	71	27	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	32	1	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	23	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	23	1	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	58	38	3	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	76	22	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	32	6	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	29	11	0	14

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

96. The quality of education provided for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Recent organisational changes have made a very strong contribution to the very good level of provision and have had a significant impact on standards. Children currently in the Foundation Stage are achieving very well, and most are on course to exceed the standards expected for their age, by the time they start Year 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

97. The personal, social and emotional development of children in the nursery and reception is very good. Through very good teaching children make very good progress, and the vast majority will exceed the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach Year 1. Some enter the nursery with already well-developed skills. They are confident in group discussions and are comfortable both with adults and children. Others are less secure and need reassurance when trying new activities or working with others. All children become very aware of the feelings of others and develop very strong relationships. In a high-quality discussion about Mothers' Day, for instance, all the children in the nursery spoke clearly and confidently about their feelings. They listened to each other and showed genuine concern for a child whose grandparent was ill. Routines are very well established and children work with impressive independence. There is a feeling of mutual respect, and children throughout the Foundation Stage are already aware that they belong to a secure, caring community.

Communication, language and literacy

98. On entry to the nursery, children have adequately developed speaking, listening and early reading skills. Their writing skills are not quite as well developed. Through very effective teaching, particularly in the development of spoken language, children make very good progress and enter the reception classes with secure foundations for further language development. Approximately one third of the children currently in reception display levels of attainment above those expected for their age. The high-quality input of teaching and support staff makes a major contribution to children's success. Independent reading and writing activities are used particularly effectively to develop literacy skills well. In a very good lesson focusing on 'Jasper's Beanstalk', planning was linked well to the National Literacy Strategy format, teaching was clear, and excellent use was made of questioning to encourage good oral participation. All children received a high level of challenge. More able children read the big book with independence and confidence, and children of average ability used initial sounds to write simple words. Children with special educational needs were very well supported and achieved equally well. In a discussion about reading, children of all abilities perceived themselves as competent readers. A less able child pretended to read 'The Toys' Party', from cover to cover, whilst pointing to the text and discussing particularly enjoyable parts of the story. Although not yet reading accurately, pre-reading skills were firmly established and this child already had a genuine love of books and the confidence to succeed.

Mathematical development

99. Most children enter the nursery with levels of mathematical understanding expected for their age. They have access to a wide range of interesting activities and make very good progress. Mathematical development is an integral part of each nursery session, with activities ranging from counting the number of children present to shopping in the supermarket play area. Children in the nursery understand the language of shape and are familiar with circles, triangles, squares and rectangles. Most can count to ten, and beyond, and develop a real enthusiasm for mathematics.
100. In reception classes, the quality of teaching is consistently high. Pupils with special educational needs receive a very good level of support and are able to contribute fully in lessons. A rich variety of interesting activities, very appropriate to the children's individual needs, enables them to make very good progress. All teaching and support staff know the children well and promote the use of

mathematical language effectively. In a lesson on height, for example, children began to understand shorter and taller, although some were still a little uncertain as they tried to put children in a line in the order of their height. In another lesson, children wrote simple number sentences, such as 'three plus four makes seven'. Every activity provided a high-quality learning experience, and children of all abilities enjoyed the variety and challenge. They remained totally engrossed in their work throughout the lesson. Most children in reception are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals by the time they reach Year 1.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

101. In the nursery, children have a good basic knowledge of the world around them. Very good teaching helps them to successfully build on this understanding and children make rapid progress. Lessons involve numerous opportunities for children to experiment with tools and construction toys, explore the textures of materials, and develop independent computer skills. For instance, a group of children made egg and cress sandwiches, using cress they had grown from seed, whilst another group watched wide-eyed as their helper showed them how to make pasta necklaces. They used the story of 'Handa's Surprise', very effectively, to explore the texture and taste of various fruits. Attractive displays of fruit-prints further supported their learning. In information and communication technology, individual children use a very appropriate program to develop mouse skills. They display good control as they select the correct tool to drill holes or fix screws and particularly enjoy the accompanying sound effects.
102. As children move through the reception year, they continue to make very good progress. Activities are linked effectively to stories such as 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. In one discussion, children were asked to decide which container would make the most appropriate plant pot. Although the quality of answers varied considerably, most justified their choices well and decided the 'bendy' containers wouldn't be much good because they would 'go soggy'. They knew their ideas were valued, and one child confidently told the teacher that 'fragile is like when pottery breaks'. Another group was selecting plants for their patio containers, and children of all abilities were very clear about how a plant grows. Some children were making books about 'How to grow a flower' whilst others were selling plants in the 'Greenwood Garden Centre'. The room was a hive of activity and there was a high level of understanding.
103. Throughout the Foundation Stage, good use is made of educational visits, to places such as Ashe End Farm and Twycross Zoo, to support children's learning.

Physical development

104. Children reach above the expected standards both in the nursery and reception classes. They have access to very attractive play areas. During a well-structured outdoor play session, nursery children displayed considerable confidence as they used the climbing frame and slide with and without adult support. They showed good awareness of each other's space as they negotiated the circuit on their bicycles, cars and scooters. All activities were purposeful and effective. In an equally good physical education lesson, children demonstrated good co-ordination as they balanced on the large apparatus. They moved confidently under, over, around and between the benches. Some tried to create their own movements and most dressed and undressed with an impressive level of independence.
105. In reception classes, the quality of teaching and children's rate of learning are also very good. Well-established routines for dressing and undressing ensure children continue to display a high level of independence. In a very good physical education lesson involving the use of a parachute, adults and children were totally involved in a whole range of interesting and exciting activities. Children laughed and talked excitedly as they tried to bounce the ball on the surface of the parachute. They knew the importance of working together as a team. Careful attention was paid to ensuring a child with special educational needs was fully integrated into the lesson. Language skills were developed very effectively as children followed instructions to move the parachute upwards and downwards.
106. Children handle pencils, scissors and glue spreaders with increasing confidence and skill. They take responsibility for activities, such as watering the plants or organising their own playtime drinks.

A significant proportion of children have already achieved the Early Learning Goals in this area of development.

Creative development

107. Children enter the nursery at various stages of development. Through very effective teaching, children make very good progress in their creative development. They know a wide range of songs and rhymes. In an entertaining music lesson, children sang number and nursery rhymes with great enthusiasm. They remembered the words well and already had clear favourites. They enjoyed dancing to 'Rock Round the Mulberry Bush' and they knew the names of musical instruments such as tambourines. On another occasion, children playing in the supermarket used the shop till well, packed the items sensibly, and worked together with high levels of co-operation.
108. In reception, children continue to develop their creative skills very well. Work is linked effectively to topics, and there is a good balance of free-choice and focused tasks. In a painting activity, children explored colour and developed their observational skills well as they tried to replicate a houseplant with variegated leaves. They mixed their own colours and persevered with the task until they were happy with the end result. Many shades of green were apparent, and the colour match was very realistic. Most children have well developed creative skills and are on course to exceed the expected level in this area of learning by the time they reach Year 1.

ENGLISH

109. The results of the National Curriculum tests in 2000 taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, showed that standards were average in reading and writing compared with schools nationally. Compared with similar schools, results in reading were average, but in writing results were below average. The standard work of the pupils currently in Year 2 reflects a broadly similar picture, with pupils on course to attain standards that match the national expectations by the end of the year. The results of the National Curriculum tests in 2000 taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, showed that standards in English were above average when compared with schools nationally and were well above average when compared with similar schools. These results are reflected in the performance of the pupils currently in Year 6 where most pupils are attaining levels that exceed national expectations. Overall, a picture is emerging of good standards being maintained.
110. The school has created a language-rich environment that promotes high standards in English by the time pupils leave the school. Appropriate measures have been put in place, since amalgamation, to raise standards further at Key Stage 1, and these are beginning to have a positive impact, but this is not yet reflected in test results at the end of the key stage.
111. By the time they are seven, pupils' skills in speaking and listening are above those expected nationally. This is a result of the emphasis the school places on language development and the consequent good teaching. Pupils listen attentively to the teachers' introductions and explanations, and generally concentrate well on what is being said. Pupils speak in clear sentences, and many have an extensive vocabulary, which allows them to articulate their ideas very effectively. Teachers lead discussions well, using open-ended questions to encourage pupils to extend their ideas and to build on the contributions made by their classmates.
112. Teachers are careful to promote learning in speaking and listening across all subjects of the curriculum. This results in pupils making good progress throughout the school and standards are well above average by the time pupils leave the school. Teachers create many opportunities in lessons for pupils to talk about their work, both in whole-class discussion and in collaborative work in small groups. In a few less effective lessons, the teacher does most of the talking, and opportunities are missed for pupils to refine their oral skills through extended conversations. Planning for the development of speaking and listening skills across all subjects is very good. Opportunities are created for pupils to develop their oral skills through debates, interviews, and role play in many subjects. Pupils in Year 5 were observed in a history lesson recreating a 1920's radio interview where pupils in the 'audience' addressed prepared questions to Howard Carter about his life and experiences at the tombs of the Pharaohs. One pupil anchored the session very well,

microphone in hand, as Howard Carter, and answered with an excellent use of language of the time and a style appropriate to the role. Pupils make good progress with their learning through their participation in drama. For example, in an assembly pupils from Year 5 gave a high-quality dramatic presentation of railway poetry by poets such as Stevenson, Auden, and Eliot. Pupils in Year 6 have written and performed their own version of Macbeth during literacy lessons, showing a good understanding, for their age, of Shakespeare's writing. Pupils belonging to the drama club recently took part in Millennium Celebrations, performing for an audience of two thousand people at Birmingham's Symphony Hall.

113. By the age of seven, standards in reading are average. More able pupils demonstrate an enjoyment of reading and respond to humour or interesting content. They read fluently and expressively, talk enthusiastically about the plot and characters, and make confident predictions about how the story will develop. All classrooms at Key Stage 1 have attractive and inviting book areas where pupils may quietly enjoy reading a book of their own choice for pleasure. Pupils' experience of non-fiction books enables them to locate information reasonably quickly, using the index and table of contents. Teachers promote dictionary skills well, encouraging pupils to locate letters of the alphabet quickly and to find words in their dictionaries using both first and second letter where necessary. During the inspection, pupils in Year 2 used this knowledge effectively to create an index for their own booklets in science. There is a very good range of both fiction and non-fiction books in the libraries and classrooms that help them to develop their skills. Readers of average ability are much more hesitant. They use their knowledge of phonics and picture cues to work out unfamiliar words, but rarely use contextual or grammatical cues. They know the meaning of 'title', 'author', and 'illustrator'. Below-average readers have a basic sight vocabulary, but they read without expression, and their basic word-building skills are insecure. They are reluctant to discuss their books in any detail and have a much narrower experience of reading at home.
114. By the age of eleven, pupils' reading skills are above average. Most pupils are expressive and responsive readers and read regularly for pleasure. They know how a library is organised and understand the system used for cataloguing non-fiction books. Many pupils belong to a library and use both the school library and the public library for personal research. Pupils scan quickly for information, and refer confidently to the text to support their arguments in discussion. Less confident readers lack the full range of strategies for working out unfamiliar words, and none automatically refer to the text when expressing opinions. They are hesitant and mechanistic readers and make frequent errors.
115. By the age of seven, most pupils reach the nationally expected level in writing. Pupils in Year 2 write for a range of purposes and in support of other subject areas. For example, in their geography work they write speech bubbles, using information and communication technology, about the 'Isle of Struay', and they write about the attractions of Aldridge. They write their own short plays, and they write sound poems, with text such as '*...Plates crash, crash, Taps splash, splash....*'. The most able pupils write in complex sentences, punctuated with full stops, and practise their skills in a wide range of subjects as opportunities are created for them to extend their writing. Although most pupils know that sentences have capital letters and full stops, not all transfer this knowledge into their everyday writing. Handwriting varies from well-formed letters that are consistent in size and appropriately spaced to poorly formed letters with no spaces between the words.
116. At Key Stage 2, the good teaching ensures that pupils make good progress in their learning overall, which accelerates towards the end of the key stage where the quality of the teaching is particularly good. Pupils develop a good sense of audience and adapt their writing for many different purposes. Pupils in Year 6, for example, have written letters to the Prime Minister about the destruction of the 'Cloud Forests' of Costa Rica, and are eagerly awaiting a response. They were observed reading and interpreting more formal letters, a solicitor's letter in complex legal language, and translating this into everyday language that people could understand, for example, '*An outbuilding of the said premises, a detached edifice formerly utilised for the storage of fossil fuel*' became the coal shed. Most pupils in Year 6 use expressive, descriptive language very effectively in their writing. They organise fiction and non-fiction writing for specific purposes; for example, stories, poems, accounts, diaries and biographies. One pupil has used an old tea towel and 'aged' paper to create her own version of Anne Frank's Diary. This was done in her own time and is a clear example of

the motivation and interest of the pupils. In Year 6, pupils refine their writing very successfully through drafting and redrafting and many use the computer very effectively to edit their writing. The use of literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum is a strength of the school. Pupils use research skills from books, CD-ROMs and the Internet, at home and at school, for work in history, geography and religious education. They apply writing skills learned in literacy lessons in many different subjects as they make notes, write letters, draft and redraft work and apply information and communication technology skills very effectively in their writing.

117. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is generally satisfactory and good at Key Stage 2. The progress made in pupils' learning improves in Year 4 and is accelerated in Years 5 and 6 where the quality of the teaching is, frequently, very good. Lessons are usually planned well and matched carefully to the National Literacy Strategy. Very good lessons contain features such as high expectations of work and behaviour, and enthusiasm for literature and the power of language. In these lessons, teachers inspire the pupils, carrying them along with their own energy, enthusiasm and enjoyment. Also in these lessons, teachers show confident subject knowledge, both of literature and of the use of language, and this enables them to teach basic skills with great care and exactitude and to constantly challenge pupils to attain high standards.
118. Teachers have a good understanding of the literacy strategy, which is making a significant contribution to raising standards. In a small minority of lessons, the work planned does not always take into account the varying needs and abilities of all pupils. It is not always demanding enough for the more able pupils and, occasionally, too difficult for those with special educational needs. Consequently, a few pupils are unable to work independently enough to allow the teacher to concentrate fully on a specific group, with the result that some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Pupils who receive support, through the additional literacy strategy, make very good progress as a result of very well focused teaching designed to meet their specific needs. The strategy of setting pupils into ability groups at Key Stage 2 is successful because it enables teachers to target pupils' needs very specifically and thereby improve the rate at which individuals progress with their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in literacy lessons where support staff work effectively to meet their needs. However, the teachers do not always refer sufficiently to the targets on pupils' individual education plans in order to match work to those needs. Pupils for whom English is an additional language, and those who need extra help, are supported well through the system that the school now has in place to meet their needs.
119. The subject is managed very well. Through regular evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning across the school, the co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths within teaching and the areas where improvements could be made. Governors are kept regularly informed of developments in the subject and are also fully involved in the target-setting process. The co-ordinator leads the subject well and supports her colleagues effectively in terms of lesson planning. There is a good range of resources to support teaching, and the quality of both fiction and non-fiction materials, including dictionaries in classrooms, are also good. These are well organised, allowing pupils easy access. The school has two very attractive libraries that are well stocked with books. All classes have timetabled access to the libraries on a weekly basis. This supports pupils effectively in their learning, as well as developing successfully pupils' interest in books. The co-ordinator has worked very hard to set up systems to track pupils' progress. Test results are analysed carefully, and the results used to set appropriate targets. Currently, only pupils in Year 6 have personal targets that they review with the teacher. Pupils' progress in reading and writing is carefully tracked as they move through the key stages. The literacy co-ordinator is a highly skilled and enthusiastic teacher and keen to promote literacy and raise standards. There is a great deal of teaching expertise within the school and this is having a very positive impact on improving standards. A range of theatre visits, including a visit to Stratford Memorial Theatre for pupils in Year 6, enhances learning, broadens pupils' horizons and helps to raise standards ever higher.

MATHEMATICS

120. The results of the National Curriculum tests, in 2000, taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1, showed that standards in mathematics were below average. Although a large majority of pupils

reached the expected level, a higher than average percentage of pupils only achieved the lower level. Compared with similar schools, test results were also below average.

121. Inspection evidence shows that standards at Key Stage 1 are rising and, for pupils currently in Year 2, are now broadly average. A greater percentage of pupils are achieving higher levels of performance, and a smaller percentage are working at a below-average level.
122. The results of the National Curriculum tests, in 2000, taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, showed that standards in mathematics were average. Compared with similar schools, results were also average.
123. Inspection evidence shows that for the pupils currently in Year 6 there is a fairly similar picture to the previous year with standards that are average. However, there is evidence to indicate that higher-attaining pupils are achieving better, and this is likely to improve test results marginally in 2001, but more significantly in 2002.
124. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress through the school. Pupils achieve best in Years 2, 4, 5 and 6 where the teaching of mathematics is strongest. The school has a clear focus on raising standards in mathematics and has implemented a number of strategies that are beginning to take root. A comprehensive audit of the subject has been completed and areas of weakness targeted, such as improving problem-solving techniques, teaching of time, mental calculations and mathematical vocabulary. Additional resources, including additional classroom support, are now in place. Teachers' classroom performance is monitored regularly and guidance given on how their quality of delivery can be improved. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has also made a positive impact on mathematics standards. However, the most significant factors in raising standards have been the close match of work to pupils' ability levels in groups and sets, and the higher expectations that teachers now have of pupils' performance.
125. In Year 2, all pupils have a sound understanding of place value, identifying hundreds, tens and units digits in numbers. They sequence these numbers in the correct order. The most able pupils have a good concept of the value of a thousand and count on beyond 999. Most pupils are confident when counting in twos, fives and tens. Pupils learn quickly to round numbers up and down to the nearest ten. They tell the time, using digital and analogue clocks, recognising a quarter past and half past, but lower-attaining pupils find it difficult to understand the concept of a quarter to the hour. Most pupils have a sound knowledge of two- and three-dimensional shapes. In problem-solving activities, involving money, most pupils successfully use coins from a purse to find the total cost of an item, although lower-attainers use only low value coins and small sums of money below ten pence. Pupils are well motivated and answer teachers' questions using appropriate mathematical vocabulary.
126. Pupils in Year 6 use their multiplication tables confidently and know how to invert multiplication statements into division. Only a small percentage of lower-attaining pupils find difficulty in this process, struggling with eight and nine-times tables. Higher-attaining pupils solve problems using decimals. They cope well with addition and multiplication sums that involve two places of decimals. Nearly all pupils in this year group convert mixed numbers to improper fractions and answer questions involving fractions of whole numbers, drawing successfully on their knowledge of division.
127. Pupils generally have a secure knowledge of area and perimeter and how to measure angles accurately using a protractor. They understand reflective symmetry and draw lines to indicate the axes of a variety of different shapes.
128. Pupils are set challenging tasks in problem-solving activities. The higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 use a full range of mathematical skills to gain information from a holiday brochure; for example, working out the cost of a family holiday. They explain their reasoning when checking their answers. Lower-attaining pupils are equally well challenged in their activities, but the processes involved are less complex and, sensibly, they are allowed to use calculators to check the reasonableness of their answers.

129. In work related to data handling, most pupils in Year 6 collect data for a frequency diagram successfully. They interpret the results from a completed diagram, drawing appropriate conclusions. They construct line graphs to represent the average temperatures and suggest reasons for the fall and rise at different times of the day, month or year.
130. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good at both key stages. The best teaching is at Key Stage 2 where the system of setting pupils by ability allows teachers to match the level of the work very closely to the level of pupils' attainment. The allocation of an additional teacher to the year band for the timetabled lessons also means that the numbers of pupils in each group are smaller and that teachers can monitor individual pupils' progress more closely. Teachers throughout the school are conscious of the need to improve standards in the subject and plan work that is challenging in order to help pupils reach their full potential. There are some good examples of very challenging work for high-attaining pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6.
131. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly using the National Numeracy Strategy document as the basis for their weekly planning. They are mindful of the needs of pupils with different levels of ability and match work appropriately. Lesson objectives are usually shared with the pupils and reinforced at the end of the lesson, although, sometimes, these closing sessions are not well focused. They tend to sum up the content of the lesson and do not consolidate effectively the new learning acquired by pupils.
132. The basic skills of calculation are taught well by teachers, and this allows pupils to make good progress with their acquisition of numeracy skills. Teachers frequently revisit basic computational skills in mental sessions by asking quick-fire questions, or by setting timed opening exercises. These sessions have good pace and taught well throughout the school.
133. Pupils produce a good volume of work and concentrate well when completing tasks. Teachers manage classes effectively and ensure that pupils listen to explanations and join in the lesson by answering questions. There are good relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils' behaviour is almost always good. Teachers try to stimulate pupils by making the work interesting, as in a Year 2 lesson on rounding to ten, when the teacher rolled a huge dice to represent tens and units and passed round a cloth bag containing cubes for pupils to estimate.
134. Most lessons move along at a good pace, and support staff and parental helpers make a useful contribution to pupils' learning. In the one unsuccessful lesson observed, the pace of the lesson was too slow because the teacher spent too long on the initial introduction and pupils became demotivated. Resources are used effectively to develop pupils' skills in addition and subtraction. For instance, in Year 1, the homemade washing line helped pupils to count forwards and backwards to find the answer to a simple problem.
135. Teachers ensure that pupils acquire knowledge and understanding in lessons, through direct teaching and consolidation exercises. In the most effective lessons, teachers show confident subject knowledge and good levels of expertise. They are enthusiastic and ask searching questions. This was exemplified in a Year 5 lesson when the teacher asked pupils to explain their methods of working to the remainder of the class. The mental processes were shared, and the whole class benefited, because their understanding became more firmly rooted. In some lessons, teachers encourage pupils to work together and share ideas. This collaborative approach usually proves to be effective by increasing pupils' experiences and opportunities to share knowledge.
136. Although satisfactory overall, marking procedures are variable throughout the school. There are some good examples in Year 4 where teachers not only mark pupils' work thoroughly, but also make written remarks that explain to pupils what they have done well and how they can improve. In some other year groups, marking is less detailed and work is merely ticked. A target-setting approach is developing, with teachers usefully writing targets for pupils to achieve inside the cover of exercise books. At present, these targets tend to be general and not reviewed regularly enough to have a significant impact on learning. Homework is set regularly and supports learning appropriately. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates because tasks are well matched to their levels of attainment.

137. Literacy skills are used very effectively by pupils, especially in problem-solving activities, which require a good level of comprehension. Information and communication technology is used to support data-handling work, but evidence suggests that it is better developed at Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2.
138. The monitoring of teaching, the review of pupils' work, the analysis of test performance and the tracking of pupils' progress, through the use of assessment data by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, and subject co-ordinator, are having a positive impact on raising standards. There is a clear commitment to improvement through development planning that the staff and governors share. The school has set realistic targets for the future, and inspection evidence indicates that it is on course to meet these goals.

SCIENCE

139. Teachers' assessments at Key Stage 1, in 2000, showed that most pupils attained standards that matched expectations. In the National Curriculum tests, in 2000, taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, results were average when compared with schools nationally and with similar schools. At Key Stage 2 the trend over the previous two years shows an improving picture that is broadly in line with national trends. Inspection evidence shows that pupils, currently in Years 2 and 6, are achieving standards that are average.
140. At both key stages pupils gain appropriate skills of scientific enquiry. In Year 2, pupils are familiar with the process of predicting and finding out in scientific terms, but do not understand the meaning of 'fair test'. They investigate plants and carry out effective tests to discover the strength of a magnet. Pupils record their conclusions clearly by writing down their results, drawing pictures or tables and completing worksheets. In Year 6, pupils collect information and record their results effectively, by drawing tables, diagrams and graphs. They make appropriate written observations and work as a group in investigations making clear verbal and written responses at an appropriate level for their ages. Pupils in all classes present their work well. In Year 6, pupils give clear explanations of a fair test and understand that only one variable can be changed. Pupils are encouraged to make suggestions, which they do well, using the necessary scientific language. All pupils' contributions are respected by their teachers.
141. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils make careful observations when looking at plants, and successfully find out about the conditions required for healthy plant growth. They accurately identify parts of a plant and know that seeds are required in order to make more plants. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils discuss a 'habitat' in relation to living things, as well as the implications of the 'foot and mouth' epidemic and its impact on the environment. They are aware of important conservation issues in connection with natural habitats, for example, in relation to the possible effects of the destruction of the 'Cloud Forests' of Costa Rica. They have explained their views and concerns clearly in recent letters sent to the Prime Minister.
142. Younger pupils gain appropriate knowledge about the properties of different materials. They talk confidently about different materials, distinguishing those that are natural from those that are man-made. They consolidate this knowledge further in other subjects, such as geography, where, for example, they looked at the man-made and natural features of an island. Pupils in Year 2 suitably describe the properties of some materials as 'smooth', 'soft' and 'rough', but display limited understanding of how materials can be changed. Pupils in Year 4 acquire appropriate knowledge about the properties of various solutions, for example, learning about the different degrees of viscosity of different solutions. Pupils in Year 6 are confident in their knowledge of materials and their properties, providing examples of chocolate and ice as materials that will change when heated. They know that some changes can be reversed and others cannot. Pupils provide suitable explanations of the process of testing clay and changing it back to its original state following a natural process of drying.
143. Throughout the school, pupils generally acquire appropriate knowledge and understanding about a range of physical processes. For example, pupils in Year 1 talk about a magnet as being 'strong' and decide that a horseshoe magnet is 'stronger' as a result of a test using metal paper clips.

Pupils in Year 2 pupils are confident in their knowledge of sources of light, but not of sound and movement. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 display a suitable breadth of knowledge of physical processes, with most using a good range of scientific terminology in their explanations. In a lesson seen in Year 3, pupils gained some experience of investigating sound and pitch but did not have sufficient opportunities to develop their understanding in these areas. Pupils in Year 5, however, carry out appropriate work planning their own experiments to see how pendulum swings can be changed and measured, paying good attention to the 'fair test' principle.

144. The quality of teaching is sound overall, with some examples of good teaching at both key stages and, as a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in their learning. In the instances of good teaching, lessons are planned well, with clear learning objectives. In these lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievements and challenge them to think and try things out for themselves, especially in upper Key Stage 2. Most teachers place good emphasis on the consistent use of scientific language, which improves pupils' confidence in developing their scientific vocabulary. The recently-established and newly-integrated scheme of work has increased the confidence of some teachers. However, further development is still needed, particularly in the area of investigation and exploration, where, on a few occasions, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to make meaningful contributions, for example, during class discussions, as pupils are over-directed by the teacher. All teachers assess pupils' work carefully and some teachers mark pupils' work with clear comments. However, this is not consistent practice across the school. Because relationships between pupils and their teachers are usually very good, pupils generally behave very well. In the best lessons, they listen and respond with interest. When pupils do not listen sufficiently well or respond as they should to their teachers, it is usually because the extended blocks of time given to the teaching of science are too long.
145. Pupils of lower ability and those with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons with the exception of those who are taught out of class for short periods of time to support, for example, their reading. Higher-ability pupils, especially in upper Key Stage 2, are presented with suitable challenges to solve scientific problems in order to extend their thinking. Some science lessons are too long and the pupils become bored and restless.
146. Science makes a good contribution to other subjects including English and mathematics. For example, pupils write clear accounts of their science work and make good use of graphs and tables to record results of investigations. Pupils make good use of scientific language throughout their lessons. Pupils also make suitable use of information technology to support their science work. For example older Key Stage 2 pupils carried out research on the Internet to find out information for their project about space.
147. The co-ordinator provides a good level of support for her colleagues. She has integrated the national guidelines for science and the existing schemes for both key stages, in order to provide a basis for the revised curriculum. The monitoring and evaluating of teaching and learning across the school are rightly recognised as areas for further development. Resources for teaching and learning are adequate and readily available.
148. The small size of the classrooms at Key Stage 2, particularly in Years 5 and 6, makes the conducting of experiments in science difficult.
149. Science is further enhanced through the environmental club, which is very well attended by pupils in Year 6 and usefully focuses on various aspects of the environment, including re-cycling and planning new initiatives within the school grounds.

ART AND DESIGN

150. The standard of art is above that expected for pupils at the end of both key stages. Only one lesson was seen being taught at each key stage, and judgements are made not only with reference to them, but also to the scrutiny of pupils' work and portfolios, teachers' planning, and discussions with pupils and staff.

151. By the age of seven, pupils make good use of a range of materials and successfully investigate different processes, experimenting with chalks and pastels, paints, pattern and colours. For instance, they draw sensitively, from their own observations of flowers and translate these ideas into textured, three-dimensional pieces, using thread-weaving techniques. They develop ideas systematically through a series of lessons, for example, on line. From simple, well-controlled straight, zigzag and circular lines in pencil and crayon, they use torn paper, tissue and painted strips in repeating patterns and random forms. Their work is lively and careful and develops into looking for line, form and texture in buildings, as part of their topic. Following a visit to local shops, pupils produce good quality designs for a tile on paper. During the inspection, pupils created their tiles in three dimensions. They made good use of oil and salt dough that was worked for a few days and then baked. The pupils worked together in pairs with exemplary co-operation, discussing how to translate the line drawing into a textured surface. Pupils are mature, confident and sensible in their decisions and successfully evaluate each other's work honestly and discriminatingly. They say what they like and why, for instance, 'I like this one because he has been artistic in his patterns.'
152. By the age of 11, pupils are able to use a wide range of media sensitively and carefully, with increasing skill and maturity. These include batik, marbling, modelling in clay and card, drawing, painting, watercolour and collage. In Years 4 and 5, pupils use sketchbooks well, for rough drawings and developing ideas, but this is not a consistent practice throughout the key stage. A very good example of their use was found in Year 5, when pupils compiled a collection of Ancient Egyptian patterns, and then used them successfully to decorate and enhance their canopic jars and pots. These pupils also evaluated their work effectively and discussed what they would change next time. For example, some pupils were not so happy with the shape of their piece, whilst others realised they had made the clay too wet or did not smooth the coils sufficiently.
153. Pupils use artists, such as Monet, as inspiration for their work, using very sensitive brush-strokes and mixed-paint techniques, mimicking his style, but adding their own character very well. They also use computers well to design pictures. Pupils' figurative work is well developed through using different media and methods. Very effective pieces are created in a stencil-like technique; for example, pupils in Year 5 had created striking pictures of skiers with the contrasting colours of the red costume against the swirling glacial background. A very high standard of pastel drawing was seen in a Year 6 class, where pupils had drawn each other in a very sensitive, mature way. Some pupils had chosen hands or feet, and one drawing of a foot was particularly delicate in line and structure. Pupils also use African influences of colour and form to create designs of an elephant or mask-like figures. Pupils paint watercolour, monochromatic, still life pieces and, as homework, make boxes from many kinds of materials as part of their study of containers. One boy made a pyramid and said it was 'the ultimate container'. Artwork also supports other subjects well. Good examples were seen, for example, in history with drawings depicting industrial pithead buildings and other drawings of Ancient Egyptian civilisation.
154. Whilst no overall judgement can be made of teaching and learning, the two lessons seen were of a consistently high standard, and the quality of pupils' work is good. Pupils work with enthusiasm and concentration, and they collaborate well when necessary. They discuss their work confidently and know how they might improve. Pupils' work is displayed well, suitably celebrating and encouraging pupils' achievements. The subject is ably led by a co-ordinator who has expertise and great interest, and who has very good ideas of how she wants the subject to progress. However, she rightly recognises the need to develop her monitoring role and introduce opportunities for her to work with colleagues to improve their own skill-level. At present, the subject is under review and consideration is being given, on how to systematically improve pupils' skills and techniques, when art may not be taught each term and pupils do not have regular opportunities. The school is aware of the problems that this can cause.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

155. Standards in design and technology are in line with those expected of pupils at the end of both key stages. Pupils make sound progress and those with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates when taking into account their prior attainment levels.

156. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop appropriate skills, knowledge and understanding for their age. For example, pupils in Year 1 make appropriate plans in preparation for constructing their own rooms within a bungalow made from re-cycled cardboard boxes. On a large plan, produced by the teacher, they draw doors and windows and describe the materials and tools they will require to complete the tasks. They describe their choice of materials, explaining that they need cellophane for the windows so that they can see out of the room, and masking tape for a hinged door so that it will open. In Year 2, pupils successfully plan the process of making a sandwich. They taste different types of bread to see which has the most suitable qualities, select the fillings and, when the task has been completed, evaluate their work thoroughly, making suggestions as to how it could have been improved.
157. Pupils in Year 6 have a good knowledge of the processes involved in design and technology. In a well-prepared unit of work, they canvassed the views of pupils in Year 2 and took their views and interests into account before planning and making a jigsaw puzzle. Pupils work with a range of materials, evaluating their suitability for the task to be undertaken. They use their skills well and take care with assembling their products and finish off their work neatly. For example, they design a box to hold the jigsaw pieces and various mechanisms are used to open and close the container. Some pupils are very imaginative and choose to make unusually shaped containers. One pupil constructed a cylindrical container with a hinged lid, whilst another pupil made a holder like a matchbox with a sliding drawer. They evaluate their completed work critically, noting what pleased them and what they would change if they repeated the exercise.
158. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning because too few lessons were observed. However, from evidence available, teachers demonstrate a good level of knowledge and prepare their lessons well. They are aware of the need for safe practices and stress this periodically in lessons. In one good lesson, two teachers worked closely together in a Year 6 classroom. Even though the room was very cramped, owing to the large number of pupils present and the limited space available, they motivated and managed the pupils well. The pupils showed good levels of interest and worked independently collecting materials for assembly and finishing their jigsaw containers. It is evident that pupils enjoy their work in design and technology and gain pleasure from planning and construction activities. They behave well and develop mature attitudes in their work.
159. The co-ordinator has designed a good curriculum for the school. There is a good range of activities that are appropriately matched to pupils' ages and attainment levels. Units of work are based on half-termly topics that form good links with other subjects. However, some units of work are spaced too widely apart within the school year so that some groups of pupils do not have continuous experiences of the subject. This hinders the development of pupils' skills and tends to slow pupils' progress. Careful attention is given to building up of pupils' skills in literacy, information and communication technology, and numeracy, through design and technology activities. The school has forged good links with the local secondary school. An annual design and technology day is arranged and pupils in Year 5 have beneficial experiences in the host school by being taught by specialist staff and using more sophisticated equipment. There are too few opportunities for the conscientious co-ordinator to monitor the development of teaching across the school. Photographs are taken of completed work, teachers' planning is shared, periodically, and samples of pupils' evaluations and planning are reviewed, but there is insufficient focus on the quality of teaching in lessons for the co-ordinator to gain a clear view of standards. Assessment procedures are being implemented gradually and this should enhance the quality of pupils' work further in this well-established subject.

GEOGRAPHY

160. Standards at the end of both key stages are broadly in line with those expected, and pupils' achievement levels are sound. As only two lessons were seen at Key Stage 1, judgements are based upon these lessons, talking to teachers and pupils, and looking at pupils' work. No overall judgements can be made on the quality of teaching and learning. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make generally sound progress throughout the school. Links with other subjects, such as science and history, are planned well and make a good contribution to geography.

161. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils draw comparisons between their own environment and the Isle of 'Struay'. They successfully compare natural and man-made features as they record the different characteristics of the island home and those of their own. Pupils in Year 2 discuss ways of improving the environment by suggesting a 'tidy up' and the planting of flowers. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed sound geographical knowledge about a range of countries and areas. As part of their programme for geography, pupils have the opportunity to visit many places of interest. For example, in Year 6, pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are enhanced through a four-day trip to an outdoor education centre in North Wales. Pupils develop a sound understanding of appropriate geographical terms and refer to 'erosion' and 'the environment' in the correct context. Information and communication technology is used both at home and school in pupils' project work on Kenya.
162. The curriculum is developing and changing in the light of the new National Curriculum and new government guidelines for geography. At the present time, a draft policy has been prepared and updated. Pupils are assessed in line with the expected levels for geography and results are recorded to assist future planning. Teachers plan together each week and planning files are monitored by senior staff. Following an audit of resources at Key Stage 1, items have been purchased and the range and quality of resources are now satisfactory. At Key Stage 2, resources are adequate. However, they will require additional items as the new curriculum becomes established.
163. The co-ordinator has worked hard to establish a consistent curriculum for all pupils. At the present time, there are no formal structures to monitor pupils' work or observe lessons in order to support colleagues in their teaching of geography.

HISTORY

164. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment in history is typical of that expected of seven-year-olds. The programme for teaching enables teachers to take pupils through interesting and challenging work. This allows them to make steady progress in their learning so that, by the end of the key stage, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, have a sound understanding of the periods and people they study. By the time they leave the school, pupils attain standards that are above those of most eleven-year-olds.
165. Insufficient lessons were seen at Key Stage 1 to enable a judgement to be made on the quality of the teaching and learning. Pupils begin to understand about the passage of time as they use objects and photographs about everyday life as an introduction to the past. Teachers choose topics that are interesting to pupils and ensure that there is a wide range of resources available to them. A good example of this is the way pupils in Year 1, as part of their topic, enjoyed a talk from a grandfather of one of the children about his childhood in the locality, focusing, for example, on changes within the home and the normal domestic routine. By the time they are seven, pupils have a sound knowledge of famous people in history, including Sister Dora, Queen Victoria and Guy Fawkes.
166. Teaching is good at Key Stage 2, and much of it is high quality. Teachers use their considerable knowledge of history to enable pupils to focus clearly on the events or circumstances that brought about changes. For example, this enables pupils in Year 6 to explore and investigate in great depth and detail, changes in the locality as they look at maps from 1866, together with photographs. They note, for example, roads that existed then and now, and the more extensive woodland area in the 19th Century. They look at the demise of the mining industry in the area and gather information from census statistics. A further strength of teaching is the way in which teachers develop pupils' skills of empathy. Pupils in Year 5 wrote about their feelings as they peered for the first time into the gloomy interior of the tomb of Tutankhamun. High-quality writing was produced by pupils because they were so inspired by the enthusiasm of the teacher and their fascination with the story, especially the curse. In a parallel class, pupils interviewed *Howard Carter* for a radio programme. The role-playing by the main characters was very high quality, with attitudes reminiscent of the era, and the class, as *Egyptians*, queried the right of the archaeologists to remove the contents of the tomb to Britain.

167. Teachers use links with other subjects of the curriculum very effectively. Pupils' literacy skills are developed well through drama, debate, research and the use of a range of writing styles, such as diary writing connected to work on Anne Frank, and character studies of Tudor monarchs. Links to art are strong, with the creation, for example, of decorated clay canopic jars and Greek vases. Teachers enrich pupils' understanding of the reality of the past by visits to museums and historic buildings. Pupils visit Boscobel House where they experience for themselves the priests' hole and the persecution of the times. Pupils in Year 6 add to their knowledge about the local area during walks around the neighbourhood.
168. Resources for teaching and learning are good. The co-ordinator has improved the range of resources since her recent appointment and these resources are supplemented by loans from the Educational Development Centre. Pupils have access to a wide range of research materials and are given many opportunities to handle artefacts first hand. A start has been made on monitoring teachers' planning, and the co-ordinator recognises the need to fully implement the assessment system currently being tried out.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

169. Pupils make sound progress at Key Stage 1 and, by the age of seven, attain standards that match expectations. A wide range of usage of computers at Key Stage 2 enables pupils to make good progress and attain above-average standards by the age of eleven.
170. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know how to use information and communication technology to organise and classify information and present their findings. They use and explore a CD-ROM based dictionary program effectively, navigating around the index facilities with reasonable confidence. They add text to pictures for reading to younger children and, in so doing, gain an awareness of using computers to generate information for a specific audience. Most pupils show confident ability to use the mouse and keyboard, with a good familiarity of the various keys required. Pupils know how to change font, style, colour and size of text. They are familiar with digital camera pictures and how these can be used with computers. Pupils use the art facilities on the computer to generate interesting pictures that enhance work in other subjects. They are familiar with systems to import clipart pictures into text they have written.
171. At Key Stage 2, pupils use information and communication technology to support their work in many other subject areas, and particularly good use is made of computers to support work in literacy. For example, pupils in Year 3 make 'Little Red Riding Hood' posters on the computer, drawing their own picture with an art program and adding the text they need. They successfully carry out mathematical surveys, and produce three-dimensional block graphs. Pupils in Year 4 carry out computer-based research into birds, for science. They make posters and use 'Wordart' facilities imaginatively to make these attractive. They also produce fairy stories, such as 'The Sleeping Beauty' in modern-day magazine format style. Pupils in Year 5 carry out research on Ancient Egypt using the Internet, and they use spreadsheets effectively to record survey information. Pupils in Year 6 make particularly good use of information and communication technology in literacy and numeracy and show an ease of familiarity with using the facilities to enhance their work in these areas. They research science topics, such as space, visiting a range of different web sites to find answers for the questions they have devised.
172. Pupils in Year 3 know how to use a range of facilities such as bullet points, underlining and formatting of titles and subtitles to improve the impact of text for the reader. They show a good knowledge of accessing files and retrieving the required information. They know how to minimise windows so that they can work on several windows at one time. Pupils in Year 4 successfully program instructions into 'Roamer World' to create attractive geometrical designs. Similarly, pupils in Year 5 work imaginatively, making highly complex and attractive designs in an art program, by creating and cutting segments from symmetrical shapes, rearranging them and changing the colour as required. Pupils in Year 6 show confident ability to cut and paste required text or pictures and transfer these in and out of programs.

173. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils show a good knowledge of the benefits of using the Internet. They have experience of using e-mail facilities, to communicate with pupils in other schools, and this provides them with much impetus for extending their literacy skills to communicate in this way.
174. Throughout the school, pupils show enthusiasm and are keen to explore information and communication technology facilities. They are familiar with the fact that difficulties sometimes occur, such as slow access to the Internet, and they show patience and persistence in overcoming such problems. Pupils work together very effectively when using the computers, sharing ideas so as to speed up their progress through tasks. They generally show confidence in using information and communication technology equipment and realise that its usage can mean quicker access to information and can help them produce information in an interesting and clear way. Because of this confidence, all different groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, generally achieve well, especially by the end of Key Stage 2. On a few occasions, pupils withdrawn from information and communication technology sessions in the computer suite, for extra support in English, do not have sufficient opportunity to catch up with the work they have missed. Occasionally, pupils work with their eyes too close to the computer monitor screen. In addition, a few pupils sometimes work at a slower pace because of a tendency to use only one finger on the computer keyboard.
175. Teaching at both key stages is good and occasionally very good. Teachers generally show good subject knowledge and provide pupils with clear explanations. Good use is made of worksheets to prompt, aid and support pupils where required, and much good utilisation of classroom support staff means that pupils have plenty of guidance available during lessons. In a few lessons seen, teachers made very good use of the projection equipment to model computer activities for pupils. This clearly made a positive impact on accelerating pupils' learning and enabled them to get on with subsequent tasks quickly and efficiently. Teachers provide challenging and interesting tasks that often complement and support other areas of the curriculum, while also enhancing pupils' current information and communication technology skills. The overall good standard of teaching across the school, and the wide range of experiences provided to help pupils to practise and improve their skills, enables them to make good progress in their learning.
176. The school has made very good progress with building information and communication technology resources and facilities. The two co-ordinators have worked extremely hard to develop and promote the use of information and communication technology throughout the school. The successful implementation of the subject is also the result of good all-round staff teamwork together with the support of the governors, headteacher and senior management staff. The co-ordinators have produced very clear planning and policy documents to support teachers' overall planning. They have also formulated an ambitious and exciting plan for the future development of the subject, which places the school in a strong position to move forward with information and communication technology. The impact of all of the work carried out is clear in the above average standards now achieved by the end of Key Stage 2, with the very good use being made of the computer suite facilities. The future planned expansion of computer resources for Key Stage 1 means the school is well placed to raise standards further for pupils in the five to seven-year-old age range. The current level of resources for information and communication technology is good compared to other schools.

MUSIC

177. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning at Key Stage 1 and achieve standards expected for their age. At Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in their learning and most pupils achieve standards appropriate for their age, with musically talented pupils achieving even higher levels. Good use of teachers' expertise and the grouping of pupils by ability, at Key Stage 2, enable pupils of all abilities to achieve equally well.
178. Musical tuition, both for instruments and the choir, is of good quality and has a positive impact on standards of musically talented pupils. Pupils achieve very well in these sessions.
179. By the age of seven, pupils listen in a focused way to a variety of music. In one class, for example, several pupils believed a Japanese song they heard was Chinese, because it sounded like the one

they had learnt in preparation for the Chinese New Year. Pupils do not always learn new songs quickly, and sometimes have difficulty pitching notes accurately, but they sing with great enthusiasm and energy. They know the names of familiar percussion instruments; they play simple rhythms and are aware of high and low sounds.

180. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils of all abilities have developed good listening skills. Pupils in Year 3, for example, were convinced the cats were arguing as they listened carefully to an extract entitled 'Love for Two Cats'. A group of more able pupils in Year 4 were well informed about the pentatonic scale, and they used glockenspiels, xylophones and recorders, very effectively, in their simple compositions. Pupils in Year 6 understand chord patterns, note values and rhythms. In a lesson based on the text 'What Mum Says', pupils tried to transfer their compositions to musical notation for the first time. About half of the group were confident enough to work unaided and most succeeded, with varying degrees of accuracy. One or two more able pupils began to sing the tune as they wrote the notation.
181. The school uses an appropriate scheme of work that provides good coverage across the whole music curriculum. Class teachers generally take their own music lessons at Key Stage 1, and the music co-ordinator takes classes at Key Stage 2. There is a noticeable difference in the quality of teaching; teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, lessons are well organised with a good range of appropriate activities. Teachers promote musical terminology well and link songs and rhymes effectively to literacy work. However, there is clear lack of confidence in the subject. Teachers rely totally on the tape-recorded units of work and, frequently, do not notice that pupils are singing the melody incorrectly. In addition, pupils sometimes become restless when they spend too long on one activity. At Key Stage 2, teachers' subject knowledge is very assured. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work and are given ample opportunity to improve and refine it. However, even in some of these lessons, girls are allowed to dominate, while boys sit passively and do not get totally involved in the lesson. Information and communication technology does not yet make a strong contribution towards pupils' learning in music.
182. Extra-curricular provision for music is good. Older pupils have the opportunity to participate in high-profile performances, such as the Gala Performance at the National Indoor Arena and, more recently, a production of 'Noyes Fludde'. Good quality tuition is provided in woodwind, brass, strings, recorder, and guitar. In assemblies, woodwind ensembles display good musicianship and a mature sense of performance. The choir sings well, with clear diction and good tone. By contrast, at other times, the quality of singing is only satisfactory and older pupils frequently lack enthusiasm.
183. The school makes effective use of its small music room. There is a wide range of familiar and more unusual multi-cultural instruments. The co-ordinators offer a good level of informal support, and music has already been identified as an area for more focused development during the current academic year. A new policy, a programme of monitoring, and a structure for assessing pupils' progress are intended as part of the review process. Currently, no one has a clear overview of how well pupils are taught, or the standards achieved throughout the school, and class teachers are uncertain about the standards they should expect. No recent training has taken place because the school has had to concentrate on the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. In addition, because current timetable arrangements make it impossible for Key Stage 2 teachers to work alongside the music co-ordinator, non-specialist teachers miss a valuable opportunity to acquire greater knowledge and confidence.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

184. Standards in physical education are in line with expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and are above expected levels at the end of Key Stage 2, especially in games, swimming and athletics. Overall, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in their learning, and, towards the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' progress in learning is accelerated by good teaching.

185. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils develop their skills of *striking* and *throwing* in games lessons. They practise in small groups, in simulated hockey, tennis and cricket situations, improving their levels of control, understanding and knowledge of these games. They have a good understanding of safety and explain to the teacher which minor hazards should be removed and how space in the hall can best be used. When given the opportunity, pupils appraise their classmates' activities sensibly. For instance, in dance, pupils share their ideas and tell the class which activities they find interesting, and these are then incorporated into their own improved movements. However, pupils do not have a sufficiently developed understanding of the reasons for exercise and the effects it has on the body.
186. Pupils in Year 6 have well-developed skills in games. They demonstrate good techniques in football and netball when kicking, catching or throwing a ball. They apply these refined skills and use space and speed to outwit their opponents in competitive games. Through discussion with pupils and by reviewing school records, it is clear that pupils achieve high levels of performance in swimming. All pupils are on course to achieve the national standard by swimming 25 metres by the end of the summer term. Many pupils are swimming long distances, already well beyond a half-mile. Pupils also swim using a variety of strokes, the most able being proficient in butterfly. They have a good understanding of the principles of water safety and know how to react in an emergency. The most able pupils tread water and have experience of survival techniques. In gymnastics, pupils demonstrate good levels of control on the apparatus, landing with precision. They have a good sense of balance and exercise safely. However, they have insufficient opportunities to express themselves and to be creative in their movements by using their well-developed skills and understanding at a higher, more challenging level.
187. Teaching is sound at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Teachers manage pupils well in lessons. They generally form good relationships and try hard to ensure that pupils reach their full potential by using a mixture of praise and encouragement. They retain pupils' interest and concentration by using a variety of methods, such as good questioning, demonstration and use of stimulating learning resources. The most successful teaching is in upper Key Stage 2, where teachers with the greatest expertise are allocated to teach classes on a regular basis. These teachers have high expectations and usually challenge pupils, both physically and mentally. This was demonstrated well in a netball lesson for girls in Year 5, where the teacher used a range of drills to improve dodging, marking and shooting skills in a competitive mini-game situation. At the end of the session, pupils evaluated their own performance and were expected to suggest ways of how they could improve further. Pupils behave well and work together effectively in teams, group situations, and when assembling apparatus. Pupils apply the principles of fair play, and dress appropriately for physical exercise.
188. The school provides pupils with a rich curriculum that covers all areas of the prescribed National Curriculum. Pupils in Year 6 participate in a residential visit to Bryntysilio in Wales and benefit from experiencing canoeing, orienteering, hill walking and tackling an assault course. There is a generous time allowance for the subject, but this is used well and justified by the good standards achieved by pupils. The range and standard of extra-curricular activities are very good at the end of Key Stage 2. School teams in football, netball and athletics are locally renowned and they reach high competitive levels. There is a strong staff commitment to supporting these activities.
189. The co-ordinator gives good leadership and manages the subject well. The scheme of work is in the process of being updated, but draft plans are comprehensive and give teachers good guidance. Assessment procedures are in the process of development and are due to be put into place by the next school year. Although some monitoring of teaching has been undertaken in the past, little has taken place since the school amalgamation. There are some minor areas of the curriculum, such as the teaching of the effects of exercise on the body and the role of non-participants, which would benefit from a more standardised approach.
190. The site facilities are good and are used effectively for the promotion of physical education. The school site is also used as a venue for local primary school sports competitions. Learning resources are also good and add variety and challenge to lessons. The halls contain a good range of gymnastics apparatus, although the junior apparatus is heavy and proves more difficult for pupils in lower Key Stage 2 to assemble.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

191. At both key stages pupils' attainment matches the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Younger pupils study Christianity, and gain appropriate understanding about the stories Jesus told. They listen to the story about the two men building houses on safe and unsafe land, understanding it well and discussing the meanings behind it. The teachers question the pupils well to encourage them to share their ideas and feelings. They understand the idea of God's love and care for mankind, but they are not mature enough to grasp the symbolic meanings of some of the stories they are told. They know the different parts of the church and understand that the font is where a baby is christened. They also know that baptism is an important ceremony for Christians.
192. By the time pupils are seven, they gain appropriate knowledge about the Moslem faith as well as Christianity. The teachers use artefacts, such as a prayer mat, very well, to show how the written script would look in the Qur'an. The pupils have a suitable understanding about the customs of Eid and have made greeting cards and drawn Mendhi patterns on their hands. They gain appropriate knowledge about Christian festivals and why they are special. For example, they listened to a Palm Sunday story about a young donkey, whose mother was the one who carried Mary to Bethlehem. As the tale progressed, there was a very moving moment, in one Year 2 class, as pupils realised the connections and that Jesus was the special king riding on the little donkey's back. The teacher's skilful story telling captured pupils' interest, motivated them, and helped them gain a good understanding about the significance of the story.
193. By the time pupils are eleven, they have a good knowledge and understanding of the practices and customs of people of other faiths and can identify some similarities and differences between religions. Younger pupils learn about life and whom they can or should trust and why. They have a suitable understanding of the symbols all around them and equate that to the symbolism of the rainbow sent by God as a promise. Older pupils consider the 'time to be...' sections of Ecclesiastes, such as 'a time to be born, a time to die' and 'a time to reap, a time to sow'. They successfully equate this with the natural disasters that happen in the world and, in a challenging activity set for them, ask themselves 'Is God there?' In their writing, pupils show a good understanding of aspects of the Moslem faith; for example, why people of this faith cover their heads but keep their feet uncovered. Pupils have also visited a Mosque, and write sensitively about all aspects of life there, such as education and the sharing of food.
194. Pupils in Year 5 link their studies to those in history and look at Bible stories connected with Ancient Egypt. Under the skilful guidance and leadership of the teacher, they act out the story about Joseph and the many-coloured coat. The teacher constantly challenges them to think about the feelings of the various characters and, consequently, they explore quite difficult areas such as jealousy and love. As they record their thoughts, they listen to the Andrew Lloyd Webber song about the techni-coloured dreamcoat from 'Jesus Christ, Superstar'. This whole experience brings the story to life and makes difficult ideas more accessible to the pupils. Pupils in Year 6 discuss and analyse very complex ideas about heroes, heroines and martyrs. In one lesson, the teacher's very careful, skilful questioning drew very profound ideas from the pupils about why a person would risk so much, and even lose their life as a consequence of what they thought and believed. There were moving moments when pupils speculated on why Janani Luwum knew the authorities would kill him, but he was not afraid. Their comments showed a sensitive understanding, for example, 'better to die in peace, than live in war'; 'by dying he would protect his family and friends'; 'by dying he would make things better for others', and 'he was a Christian and knew it would be all right, no matter what happened.'
195. The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is consistently good and planned well to enable all pupils to build on their skills and knowledge. The subject is led well by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator who monitors teachers' planning and work to make sure there is consistency in teaching and learning. So far, there has been no opportunity to monitor teaching in classrooms, but that is rightly included within the next school improvement plan as an area for development. Resources are very good and their use greatly enhances pupils' learning.