

INSPECTION REPORT

FIRS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Castle Bromwich, Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 131725

Headteacher: Ms A Bufton

Reporting inspector: Mr D J Halford
12908

Dates of inspection: 16 – 22 March 2001.

Inspection number: 230326

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
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Dreghorn Road Birmingham
Postcode:	B36 8LL
Telephone number:	0121 747 3792
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Appropriate authority:	Birmingham Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Davis
Date of previous inspection:	20 January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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12908	Mr D J Halford	Registered inspector	Geography	What sort of school is it?
			History	How high are standards? The school's results and the pupils' achievements.
			Religious Education	How well is the school led and managed?
			English as an Additional Language	
			Equal Opportunities	
19431	Mr J D Holmes	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
29426	Mr D Grimwood	Team inspector	English	How well are pupils' taught?
			Design & Technology	
23751	Mr J Fairclough	Team inspector	Mathematics	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
16761	Mr M P Hemmings	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Information & Communication Technology	
			Music	

			Special Educational Needs	
29686	Mr J S Lord	Team inspector	Areas of Learning for children in the Foundation Stage	How well does the school care for its pupils?
			Art & Design	
			Physical Education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Firs Primary School is a larger than average primary school, with 355 children on roll, and it is maintained by the Birmingham LEA. It is situated on the Firs Farm Estate in Castle Bromwich and serves its immediate area. Children struggle with the challenges of growing up in an area of substantial material hardship. The school is a newly created primary school with a Nursery, following the amalgamation, from September 1999, of the former Firs Junior School and Firs Infant School. Children are admitted to the Reception Year at the beginning of the year in which they are five, and most have the benefit of Nursery education. On entry, most children demonstrate well below average skills for their age, and there are higher than average levels of pupil mobility. Over 50% of the children qualify for meals without charge, and over 35% of the children have special educational needs. Both these figures are well above those found nationally. Almost two per cent of the children have statements of special educational needs. There is a small percentage (2%) of children who have English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, with many strengths which far outweigh its weaknesses. From a very low starting point on entry to their reception year the vast majority of children achieve well because staff care for them very well and work hard to make sure that they reach higher standards. Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communications technology are well below the national average, but have risen slowly, but steadily since the last inspection. Children clearly enjoy coming to school and behave very well. The school makes very good provision for them and supports their learning well. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the curriculum is broad, balanced and well planned to meet the learning needs of the children. Teachers and support staff work very hard to ensure that they provide a rich and positive learning environment to encourage the children to do the best they can. The school is very well led and managed and it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides very clear direction for the school. Senior managers and governors actively provide a rich and positive learning environment for the pupils which promotes personal development very strongly. This enables the children to feel secure and work hard.
- All staff work very hard and are committed to the school. They know the children, care for them very well and are keen to promote their improvement. Links with parents are good.
- Children's behaviour is very good because it is consistently very well managed in almost all classes.
- There is very good provision for children with special educational needs.
- The work of the school is enhanced by a very wide range of extra-curricular activities which interest and enthuse the children.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, because they are well below the national expectation for children aged 11.
- Making better use of information gained from assessments to take the children's learning forward.
- The consistency of teachers' marking, to show children what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was newly created, in September 1999, from the amalgamation of two existing schools. The Junior School was last inspected in January 1997 and the Infant School in March 1997. Since the amalgamation, so far as it is possible to judge, improvement has been good. Where the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum were not fully in place appropriate steps have been taken and all statutory requirements are now met. Guidelines are now in place for all subjects, together with good procedures for the monitoring and assessment of children's work and academic progress in English and mathematics. The school can show slow but steady improvement in the standards of the children's work in the important subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communications technology. More work remains to be done in these areas for children to progress towards the national expectation in these subjects.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
			2000	2000
English			E	B
mathematics			E*	E
science			E	D

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

In the national tests for children in Year 6, in the year 2000, standards of attainment were well below the national average, in English and science and in the bottom 5% of schools in country, in the case of mathematics. In comparison to similar schools, results in 2000 were above average in English, below average in science and well below average in mathematics. These results, for pupils in Year 6 reflect the introduction, immediately prior to the tests, of a group of children with special educational needs, whose inclusion had a negative effect on the overall performance of the children in that year. Children have made progress over time, though at a slower rate than the national average, and it noticeable that girls generally make better progress than boys and attain standards which are close to the national average. The school is aware of this and has a detailed programme of appropriate activities to address this. The attainment of children currently in school is generally better than that reflected in the National Curriculum tests of 2000, reflecting the commitment of the staff to enable children to achieve as well as they can. The school sets realistic targets and works hard to achieve them, but the school's efforts are often hampered by the large percentage of children who join the school in their early years, but who leave before the end of year 6.

In the national tests for children in Year 2 in the year 2000, standards of attainment were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. In comparison to similar schools, results in 2000 were below average in reading and writing, and broadly in line with the average for mathematics. Teacher assessments in science were also well below average, although the percentage of pupils gaining the higher level in science was close to the national average.

Most children enter the Reception with standards of attainment that are well below those expected for four-year olds nationally.

Standards are rising slowly, but at a pace which is below the national trend. They are not yet as high as they could be because several factors adversely affect the standards pupils reach. These include:-

- The very low levels of basic skills of many children when they start school, which, although they make good progress with their learning in the foundation stage, continues to limit their development over the course of their time in school:
- The high proportion of children on the special educational needs register:
- The high rate of pupil mobility:
- Low expectations on behalf of the staff in some classes as to the standard of attainment children can be expected to achieve.

In all other subjects children's standards of attainment are generally in line with that expected for their age, except in art, where there is insufficient evidence to reach a secure judgement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Children enjoy coming to school. Most settle quickly to their tasks and concentrate well on what they are asked to do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Children's behaviour is very good in the classrooms, around the school and in the playground. This has a positive impact on their learning.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The children have a very clear understanding of how their actions affect others. They are able to take responsibility, work together well and work independently when offered the opportunity to do so.
Attendance	Attendance is below the national average and unauthorised absence is above the national average. The school has good procedures to promote the importance of school attendance and to encourage pupils to arrive punctually.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching is satisfactory or better in 93% of the lessons seen. It is very good in 11%, good in 29%, satisfactory in 53%, and unsatisfactory in 7%. Appropriate attention is given to the teaching of the basic skills of numeracy and literacy. In almost all classes, teachers manage pupils well and use resources effectively, although in some classes, teachers expectations of what children can attain and achieve are not always sufficiently high. Good quality teaching is seen most frequently in the Reception Year, in Year 2 and in Year 6. In the best lessons, teachers are clear with the pupils about what it is they are to learn, and the children's interest is maintained by lessons which move at a good pace, as in a Year 6 lesson where children discussed both sides of an argument, and in others where numeracy lessons begin with brisk mental agility exercises. In the small number of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory teachers sometimes take too long with explanations, leading to some children losing interest, and the unsatisfactory management of some challenging behaviour reduces the quality of learning on behalf of the majority of the children in the class. Children are well supported by classroom assistants who are well informed and work alongside teachers effectively to promote successful learning for children with special educational needs.

The quality of children's learning is satisfactory. Many children throughout the school are keen to learn, work hard and want to do well. They show good quality listening skills in many classes throughout the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of the children and all statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Children are supported very well and this enables those with special educational needs to progress and make good gains in their learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The small number of children with English as an additional language are provided for well and are included effectively in the daily routines of the school. They achieve well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Children are encouraged to live and work together harmoniously, help each other and celebrate their successes. They are encouraged to know the differences between right and wrong. These aspects of personal development are strong features of the life and work of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. This is a strength of this school. The school provides very effective personal support for its children. There are good procedures to track their academic progress and monitor their performance

The school works hard and makes every effort to provide information for parents, in the form of good quality newsletters, activities, and other events to promote opportunities for parental involvement in school and active learning with the children. It is successful in encouraging a growing number of parents to undertake this active involvement and would welcome a higher degree of support in this area of partnership.

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 clear direction for the school. A strong sense of teamwork has been established in this newly amalgamated school. Much effort has been made to successfully create a good ethos and learning environment in which the pupils can experience and celebrate success.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They support the headteacher and staff well in sharing the clear direction that has been established
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Effective systems are in place. There is a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the challenges it faces.
The strategic use of	Good. The finance available to the school is carefully allocated to the

resources	priorities it has identified. Governors are keen to get the best value they can from the finance available to them.
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The level of staffing – both teaching and non-teaching - is good. It is an identified priority to maintain good levels of staffing. This enables the children to be well supported in their work. The accommodation is spacious, clean and well used. The school sets a high priority in constructing a corridor between the two main buildings to allow easy access between the buildings. The school has limited grassed play space. Learning resources are adequate, and generally of good quality.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Most parents indicated that-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like coming to school. • Children make good progress. • Behaviour is good. • The school expects children to make good progress. 	<p>Some parents indicated that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They wanted more information about the progress their children made. • They could not always approach the school with questions or problems. • The school could work more closely with parents. • The school could provide a wider range of interesting activities for children outside lessons.

The inspection team agree with all the positive comments, recognising that whilst the children do make progress and achieve well, they need to reach higher levels of attainment in important areas. The inspection team are surprised by some of the negative comments. It does not support them. The school provides a very wide range of out-of-school activities, which are well supported. The school tries extremely hard to work with parents and provide good information, including two reports a year on children's individual progress, for them. Many parents were seen to approach the school, at different times, during the inspection, and all were received well.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the National Curriculum tests in 2000, the performance of children aged 11 was well below the average of all schools nationally in English, and science. In mathematics, it was very low, placing the school in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally. When comparing the 2000 test results against schools with similar percentages of free school meals, in English the results are above average, in science they are below average and in mathematics they are well below average. Because the school was established as a newly amalgamated primary school at the start of the 1999 – 2000 year, there are no nationally published figures to view the trends of children's performance in the tests over the last five years. Statistics held by the school, however indicate that the children's' performance over that time has improved steadily in all three subjects, although at a pace that is slower than the general improvement shown by schools nationally. The analysis of test results made by the school indicates that girls perform better than boys in all three subjects and in fact the performance of girls is close to the national average. **The standards seen in the work of the children currently in Year 6 are below those expected for their age in English, mathematics and science.**
2. In the National Curriculum tests in 2000 the performance of children aged 7 was well below that of all schools nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. The test results were below those of children in similar schools in reading and writing, but close to the average in mathematics. Because the school was established as a newly amalgamated primary school at the start of the 1999 – 2000 year, there are no nationally published figures to view the trends of children's performance in the tests over the last five years. The new school did not have access to this information. Test results for 1995 and 1996, included in the last report on Firs Infant School (in 1997) indicated substantially better results for children aged 7, with the percentage of children being close to the national average in reading and below the national average in writing and mathematics, in 1996. This does indicate some improvement in mathematics, since 1996, some decline in children's performance in reading and little change in writing since 1996. Tests results in the Year 2000 indicate no marked difference between the performance of boys and girls in reading, although girls perform better than boys in writing and in mathematics. Teacher assessments for science in 2000, show that the performance of children aged 7 was well below the national average and also well below the average for children in similar schools. **The standards seen in the work of children currently in Year 2 are below those expected for their age in English and mathematics and well below those expected for their age in science.**
3. Children enter the Reception year with levels of attainment that are well below those expected of four-year-olds nationally. Children struggle with the challenges of growing up in an area of substantial material hardship and although most children have the benefit of nursery education, where they make good progress with their learning, baseline assessment carried out in school indicates that when the children start school their basic skills and their personal, social and emotional development are weak. Many have little knowledge of the world around them, nor do they have access to a range of appropriate books, pencils or toys. Good teaching ensures that the children achieve well and make good progress in their reception year. However, **at the end of their reception year, attainment is still well below that expected for children aged 5.**

4. The school has good procedures for assessing children's progress in English and mathematics and sets appropriate group targets for improvement in children's work during their time in Year 1 and Year 2. The standards of children's work do show moderate levels of improvement, but there are several factors which adversely affect children's overall attainment through the key stage:
 - for most children, the very low levels of basic skills of many children continues to limit their development over time;
 - a high proportion of children, coming from unstable family relationships, start their education at the school, but leave after a short time (some to return again later);
 - the high proportion of children on the special educational needs register.
5. Nevertheless, most teachers are not deflected from their goal of trying to enable the children to achieve well whilst they are in school. Individual target setting is in place in mathematics and in English and children's progress is beginning to be tracked effectively to provide good support for learning. Challenging but realistic targets are set, and although the school failed to meet its targets in 2000 for English and mathematics, in Year 6, a detailed analysis of the results shows that without an intake of pupils – mostly boys, with special educational needs – shortly before the tests were carried out, the school would have been close to meeting the targets.
6. The literacy levels of most children entering the school are very poor and from this low base they do make at least satisfactory progress to the extent that by the time they are eleven, children's standards in English are above those found in schools of a similar intake. Progress throughout the school is not always consistent and tends to be better at the end of each Key Stage, in Years 2 and 6. This is as a result of good teaching, and, in the case of Year 6 pupils, an extra teacher for literacy, which allows children to be taught in smaller groups of similar ability levels. The high quality teaching in a relatively small group given to pupils with special educational needs in Year 6 helps their progress. The good level of high quality support staff generally means that children with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is not their first language generally make satisfactory progress. Children's standards in speaking and listening tend to be rather higher than the rest of their literacy skills, and this is confirmed by inspection findings. However, these skills do not transfer easily to children's written work. By the time they are seven children are still printing. Only a half of the children in Year 6 classes are writing in a joined script. The style of handwriting is often undeveloped and the presentation of work is generally poor. Handwriting is not given sufficient attention nor are children's standards of presentation. Incorrect spellings and use of words are not always corrected and whilst many teachers encourage children very positively in their marking, there are occasions when incorrect writing is highly praised. This does not promote improvement. Children are given regular spelling practice and a good range of opportunities to write. The general standard of writing by the time children reach eleven years of age is well below that expected of children of that age. Few, if any, children are writing at a higher level and many are writing at levels well below those expected nationally. Teachers' expectations are too low and older children are given too few opportunities to write extended pieces against a time limit. The school has acknowledged this by introducing extended writing lessons into the timetable but these lessons seldom offer the opportunity for children to do a piece of extended writing in a limited time. Although children reach appropriate standards in other foundation subjects, their work is hindered by weaknesses in writing.
7. Children enter the school with very low levels of numeracy and although they make some progress, by the age of seven the standards of their work are well below the national average,

and also below average for children in similar schools. They have a sound knowledge of number combinations up to 10, and some can order numbers accurately to 100. However, in many cases their responses are slow and their ability to solve number problems is a weakness. Standards remain well below average as children move through Key Stage 2. Although children make some progress, this is insufficient to raise their overall mathematical standards to a high enough level to reach the nationally expected levels by the age of eleven. For example, whilst older children can answer fairly straightforward questions, such as ‘What is half of 50?’, they cannot easily work out the answer to the same question if it phrased in a more problematic manner. ‘If I double a number and the answer is 50, what is the number?’ Sometimes teachers do not always offer sufficient challenge to the higher attaining pupils, but throughout the school children respond well to their work in mathematics and they do try hard to succeed.

8. Children show interest in their science lessons, and the work of children currently in school shows signs of improvement on the standards attained in the 2000 tests and teachers’ assessments. Children in Year 2 handle scientific equipment carefully and safely, but their limited skills in spoken English, means that they do not always obtain a full grasp of the understanding of some scientific terms. Equally, as pupils progress through the school their limited writing skills has an adverse affect on their ability to fully document the work they undertake accurately and effectively. Therefore, the achievement they make in their understanding is not fully documented in their work.
9. Children with special educational needs achieve standards that reflect their individual targets. They achieve well and make good progress in their learning. They are well supported, often by classroom assistants who have been well briefed by teachers and who know their needs well. The small number of children who have English as an additional language are also well supported and they too make good progress in their learning.
10. In information and communications technology (ICT) standards of attainment are below the nationally expected levels. This is because the school has only recently been able to establish appropriate resources in the form of a computer suite which has been included in the amalgamation of the two former schools. Children throughout the school are now able to develop their skills and practise them appropriately, which they were unable to do before. In all other subjects, except art for 7 to 11 year olds, the children are reaching standards of attainment which are in line with those expected for their age. During the course of the inspection it was not possible to reach a secure judgement about the standards of attainment in art, for pupils aged 7 to 11, because there was insufficient evidence of work on which to base a judgement.

Pupils’ attitudes, values and personal development

11. The children’s attitude to learning is good. Children of all ages listen well in lessons and respond enthusiastically. Their behaviour in lessons and at playtimes, lunchtimes and after – school clubs is very good. Attendance rates are well below the national average. The school is concerned about this and has developed an effective range of strategies to monitor and improve attendance.
12. The children’s attitudes to learning are good. In all lessons children of all ages listen to their teachers, follow instructions and respond enthusiastically to questions. They handle equipment and materials sensibly and show respect for each other and their environment.

13. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. The school makes good behaviour a priority. Conversations with children show they enjoy coming to school and feel safe there. They say there are very few instances of bullying and these are dealt with effectively. The school has a vigorous anti-bullying statement. Behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes is also very good. The lunchtime supervisors have been trained in behaviour management and this has a positive impact on the quality of behaviour. Children treat adults and each other with courtesy and respect.
14. The Breakfast Club is an important part of school life. Children collect their food sensibly and sit quietly at tables whilst eating it. Children of all ages play together well. They cooperate well in the games and activities provided, and show confidence and independence. A large number of children take part in an aerobics class following Breakfast Club. They do so energetically and with obvious enjoyment. There are no instances of inappropriate behaviour. The school provides a wide range of after school clubs including dance, basketball, netball and football. These make a positive contribution to children's attitude to school. The behaviour of children in these after school activities is also very good.
15. The incidence of exclusion is decreasing. There were three in the previous school year and one in this. Details of the background and reasons for exclusion are carefully recorded. The school involves the local behaviour support service when appropriate.
16. The pupils' personal development is good. Opportunities for personal development are numerous. Children are given appropriate responsibility from the earliest age. Children are expected to tidy up and put things away. In a reception class children cleared up a range of activities and even swept soil from the tabletop after planting seeds. They did this with no fuss. They knew where things were kept in the class and acted sensibly. Children in year 6 are made "ambassadors" for an afternoon as a reward for good behaviour. A position they enjoy. They welcome visitors, take messages around school and help in the school office. Children from year 6 also operate the tape player for assemblies.
17. The school plans a wide range of educational visits. These have included trips to the West Midlands Safari Park, the City of London, to local museums and art galleries. There is a whole school trip to the seaside.
18. The quality of assemblies is good and make a valuable contribution to children's personal development. In whole school and key stage assemblies the children are attentive and well behaved. Children come in quietly and listen attentively to the composer of the week and they also listen carefully to the stories and respond eagerly to questions. Children sing well with tuneful voices. They are taught to respect each other's values, faiths and beliefs and are respectful in prayers. They leave the hall in a quiet and orderly manner.
19. The levels of attendance are well below the national averages. The level of unauthorised absence is above the national average. Some pupils arrive late at the start of the school day. The school is aware of this and is taking great steps to encourage improvement.
20. The school takes attendance and punctuality seriously. It has set a target of 93% for attendance. It awards certificates to classes that meet this target each week. A large display in the hall celebrates success in reaching this target. The school monitors the attendance of each individual child. It pursues persistent absence. The school also sends letters of praise for improved attendance.

21. Children are concerned about lateness. One child attending the Breakfast Club said he came to it, amongst other reasons, to avoid being late.
22. The school uses a system of computerised registration. The completion of class registers is efficient, consistent and complies with school and statutory requirements. Teachers greet the children in a warm and welcoming manner.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

23. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching is satisfactory or better in 93% of lessons. It is good or better in 40% and very good in 11%. Absolute comparisons with the quality of teaching at the time of the previous inspection are not possible because of the change in nature of the school, however, it is clear that standards have been at least maintained and probably slightly improved in that the level of very good teaching is slightly higher and that of unsatisfactory teaching reduced. Examples of good or very good teaching are spread throughout the school but are seen most frequently in the Reception Year, in Year 2, and Year 6. Unsatisfactory teaching is largely concentrated in Year 3. The quality of teaching has brought about improvement in pupils' attainment since the last inspections in history, geography, music, religious education and design and technology. The improved quality of teaching is having a positive effect on raising the children's standards and achievement.
24. Standards in teaching have been maintained in literacy and numeracy lessons by careful monitoring of teaching and learning by the co-ordinators for English and members of the senior management team. Co-ordinators take model lessons to show teachers how they should, in particular, implement the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies. This process has been largely successful and has led to teachers focusing more precisely on the learning objectives of the lesson. The process of targeting of learning objectives for groups of pupils of different abilities within a class has been helped by the successful implementation of these national schemes. The teaching of mathematics to the younger pupils is consistently good and the teaching of literacy is at least satisfactory in all classes and is good or very good in half of all lessons. There has been a steady improvement in standards in English over the last five years and girls at the school are now achieving levels in line with national averages. This improvement has accelerated over the last two years, a period which has coincided with the monitoring of teaching and learning.
25. Pupils benefit from the good subject knowledge of a specialist teacher of information and communication technology and although levels of attainment are not yet in line with national expectations, they are improving. A teacher's very good subject knowledge in dance enables groups of pupils to perform very well in this subject.
26. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress, benefiting from the good planning for their needs and individual help from support staff. Pupils with statements of special educational needs are well supported with effective individual plans which enable them to progress in appropriately small steps. Pupils who do not speak English as a first language are also well supported and make good progress. Higher attaining pupils are not so consistently well supported. There is some variation in some classes, but the arrangements in literacy and numeracy lessons where pupils are grouped because of their ability do enable the teachers to more precisely target their learning. Girls are performing significantly better than boys in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Teachers are aware of this. By targeting and tracking the progress of boys particularly

carefully, as well as providing material that they will find stimulating, they hope to improve the learning of boys.

27. Teaching in the reception classes is good or very good and as noted at the time of the previous inspection, remains a strength of the school. Teaching in the reception classes is supported by good knowledge and understanding of the needs of young children. This ensures that the basic skills in all areas of learning, including literacy and numeracy, are taught effectively and pupils make good progress. Reception classrooms are well organised and richly stimulating with areas of interest, for example a display of caterpillars in jars with magnifying glasses for closer study by children. Classes are very well managed and teachers have high expectations of children's behaviour. Activities are carefully planned to help children's learning. Children are encouraged to get out and put away apparatus and clear away, giving them opportunities to take responsibility and act with a degree of independence. Children are given many opportunities to speak and listen in a supportive, controlled atmosphere where teachers use open ended questions well to extend children's responses and thinking. Teachers make particularly good use of praise to encourage pupils and build self-esteem. They also make good use of high quality support staff who help the progress of individuals and small groups of pupils with concentrated tuition over relatively short periods of time. Teachers also use information and communication technology well to support the learning of pupils and this has the added advantage of building children's confidence in its use, putting them in the position to fully benefit from later teaching.
28. Teachers generally plan their lessons well. This is particularly so in literacy and numeracy lessons where in the better lessons, teachers use the national strategies to plan for all phases of the lesson and for work for different groups of pupils. They plan for the use of support staff and back up this planning with appropriate resources. This leads to good teaching. In a mathematics lesson for Year 2 pupils, good planning meant that four groups of pupils were appropriately challenged, good resources of pairs of shoes, hoops, and a number washing line allowed the teacher to ensure good progress in the group she was directly teaching and good, planned, use of support staff helped pupils in that group to develop their knowledge of counting in tens.
29. Teachers generally have good class management skills. They have high expectations of behaviour. Using a firm but friendly approach, they ensure pupils stay on task but in a positive, pleasant atmosphere. Year 2 pupils in a physical education lesson concentrating on balancing remained intensely focused on the task, made good progress and made full use of their time by quickly, quietly and efficiently putting the apparatus away. These good relationships means that pupils with special educational needs will sustain concentration for extended periods of time. This is particularly true in the 'sunrise' group, the Year 6 group for low attainers in literacy. Good class management allows teachers to give a high level of direct teaching to groups of pupils so helping those pupils to make good progress.
30. In good lessons teachers use questioning well to challenge children's thinking and get them to extend their answers. A good example occurred in a Year 6 literacy class, when the teacher questioned with skill and effectively led the pupils into an argument for and against wearing school uniforms. Teachers use the plenary sessions of lessons well to further develop the speaking and listening skills of their pupils and the good relationship between pupils means that they will listen carefully even when the speaker is not particularly clear. This occurred in a Year 3 literacy lesson where one child's rambling account of his story was listened to patiently by all in the class.

31. The marking of children's work is thorough. Teachers invariably mark children's work and offer positive and encouraging comments. However, there are too many examples of teachers offering fulsome praise for mediocre work and not correcting, often elementary, errors. Such comments do build confidence and self-esteem amongst the pupils but offers few suggestions in the way they might improve the quality of their work. Pupils have group, and in many cases individual, targets some of which are printed in their work books. These are sometimes used well by teachers who refer to them in their marking. On other occasions the work of the children seems to bear no relation to the targets and offers no opportunity for the children to meet them.
32. Where teaching is unsatisfactory it is often the result of low expectations. Unsatisfactory planning sometimes leads to insufficient challenge for pupils, particularly the more able. Poor quality worksheets which do not take into account pupils of different abilities do not demand enough of pupils in terms of level of thought or productivity. In some classes expectations of behaviour are not high enough and this leads to disruptive behaviour from some pupils which slows the pace of the lesson and means that those pupils do not listen or concentrate properly and also distract others. This sometimes leads to strained relationships between pupils and teacher.

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

33. There is a good curriculum provided for children throughout the school. In the foundation stage of learning the teachers and other adults working in the Nursery and Reception classes have created an effective learning environment for the children in their care, leading to them making good academic and personal progress in all the areas of learning expected for this age range. For children aged 5 to 11 the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are being implemented in a suitable way and this is leading to a steady improvement in standards in English and mathematics. There has been good improvement in the provision for information communication technology since the last inspections. The recent creation of a computer suite and the expertise of the co-ordinator in managing the subject are important factors in this improvement. All statutory requirements are met, as are the demands of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. There is a very good range of activities that support and broaden the children's access to learning, including breakfast and lunchtime clubs and homework. On Friday afternoon, all children are able to choose to go to one of a variety of additional curriculum enhancement groups that are taken by teachers on a personal interest basis. These activities include choir, French, fine art, T'ai Chi and sewing and provide stimulating and effective learning experiences. The curriculum helps the children to make satisfactory progress in their academic and personal development.
34. The provision for the children's personal, social and health education is very good with many opportunities for children to relate to others in a variety of situations in and out of school. As a result, they learn to respect the values and beliefs of other children and adults. This provision for social education is enhanced by an extensive range of visits, including residential visits for children in Years 4, 5 and 6, during which they learn a variety of social skills such as working together and caring for others. The children are successfully helped to develop good attitudes towards healthy eating. They learn about how medicines are drugs that can be helpful but are dangerous when misused. A focus

for this is an annual healthy living and lifestyle week in which they learn about healthy choices and how to make sensible informed decisions about drugs. The school provides for sex education in a sensitive and supportive manner that emphasises family values within a caring Christian community. The children are given responsibilities from the time they enter school and this has a positive effect on their personal development. They are able to act as monitors, librarians and, in Year 6, as school ambassadors who welcome visitors and give them directions or show them around the school. All children have weekly opportunities to take part in 'Circletime' activities, in which they sit in a circle with their teacher to talk about any problems they might have and such issues as the importance of caring for others, which effectively supports their personal development.

35. The school is successful in ensuring that all children have equal access to the curriculum. There are very effective systems and procedures in place to support children with special educational needs and, as a result, they make good progress in their learning and achieve well, especially in the basic skills of literacy. The procedures for evaluating the progress made by these children towards their learning targets are very effective, with reviews being thorough and helpful. There is good provision for children who have English as an additional language and these children also make good progress in their learning. Talented and gifted children are suitably provided for and as a result they make satisfactory progress.
36. There has been an improvement in the school's planning procedures since the last inspections and all subjects now have suitable guidelines to ensure continuity and progression of learning, especially in English and mathematics. As a result, teachers are provided with effective information about the key learning objectives and skills to be taught, so that they are able to give work that suitably builds on children's prior learning.
37. The provision for extra curricular activities offered to children is very good, with a wide variety of clubs which include football, basketball, dance, recorders, computers, sewing and environmental projects. The school also gives all children opportunity to take part in an extensive range of educational visits that enrich the curriculum by providing further significant learning experiences. Children are able to visit places of educational interest, such as Birmingham's museums and art galleries, and also a local farm to find out about farm animals at first hand. There is an annual whole school visit that has included a trip to the seaside and to the West Midlands Safari Park. There are also residential visits for children in Years 4, 5 and 6, which includes a stay in a study centre in Bromsgrove, to help develop their personal and social skills. In Year 6, the children are able to visit London to be shown round the Houses of Parliament and other interesting buildings to deepen their understanding of English history. The school arranges for many visitors to come to school, including artists, authors, musicians and drama groups, to work with children to develop their skills across a range of areas. A good example of this was seen in an evening of poetry, led by a nationally known author, when children read their own poems to an audience of parents and other children in a confident manner. This clearly added to the children's self-esteem and added a richness and quality to their immediate experience.
38. There are good links with the community that make an effective contribution to children's learning. Children go to church for celebrations such as Christingle at Christmas and for the Easter service, and clergy from local churches come into school to take assemblies. There are good links with the fire brigade, ambulance service, community policeman and school nurse that effectively develop children's understanding. The children are actively involved in raising money for a variety of charities, including 'Comic Relief' and the

'Earthquake Appeal in India'. Within these activities, the children gain a good understanding of the needs of others. There are growing links with a variety of local businesses that enable the children to gain an awareness of the world of work. The school works well with the adjacent Pines Special School to support children with learning difficulties in both schools. There are good links with the local Secondary Schools that successfully prepare children in Year 6 for the time when they transfer to these schools.

39. The provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, which shows improvement since the last inspections, and is now a strength of the school.
40. The promotion of children's spiritual development through the curriculum and acts of collective worship is good, and they have many opportunities for quiet reflection in assemblies and at other times of the day in classrooms. This was seen in an assembly taken by the headteacher on the theme of stories from sacred books, when the children had time to think quietly about problems in the world and also any problems that they might have. Within this assembly there was very good use of drama, involving a child and a teacher, to act out the story of 'David and Goliath', which effectively developed the children's understanding of this story. Spirituality is also promoted through links with the local churches, with clergy visiting school to take assemblies and to talk to the children. In assemblies the children say their prayers with reverence, and the playing of music heightens the feeling of spirituality. There are opportunities for reflection in classrooms, such as when the teacher in the nursery lights a candle to act as a focus for children's quiet thoughts. The teachers greatly value children's ideas and efforts and this is shown by the way that all children are encouraged to make contributions during lessons and by the way their work is attractively displayed around school.
41. The school's provision for moral development is very good. This has been a key area of development since the amalgamation of the two schools, as many children enter school with poorly developed ideas of what is acceptable behaviour. The school has been very successful in this area and, as a result, it is a very harmonious community in which the vast majority of children clearly know right from wrong. Moral themes feature in many aspects of the curriculum and are an integral part of the school ethos. The children are encouraged to develop good moral values through the positive behaviour policy and through the good examples set by teachers. The staff work very hard to promote a sense of fairness among children and are successful in teaching them to be tolerant of each other. "Circletime" activities are used well, to promote good moral values with children who are able to discuss issues such as bullying and how to care for others.
42. The provision for children's social development is excellent. Many children enter school with poor social skills and low self-esteem and the school works very hard to improve these aspects, so that effective learning can take place as children pass through the school. The children are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to work and play together with respect and tolerance. From the start of their time in school children are provided with outstanding social development opportunities, with the staff providing very good role models. The results of this provision are highlighted by the way that children in Year 6, working as school ambassadors, have gained the social skills to enable them to confidently welcome visitors and give them directions or show them around the school. Children listen to and respect the opinions of others, as was seen during the introductions and round up sessions of most lessons. They are encouraged to work collaboratively in pairs and small groups, as is especially evident in science, information and communication technology and physical education lessons. The range of extra curricular activities offered

to children is very good, with numerous opportunities taken to effectively support their social development, before and after school and during lunchtime activities. The opportunities for older children to take part in residential visits very effectively supports their social development.

43. The provision for children's cultural development is satisfactory. They are given opportunities to appreciate aspects of their own culture by visits to the museums and art galleries in Birmingham, and to work with visiting musicians and listen to performances of the City of Birmingham's Symphony Orchestra. They also have had opportunities to work with visitors that have included authors, poets and artists. In lessons, the children are able to experience stories, music and art from a range of cultures. Books have been carefully chosen to ensure that the environment reflects the valuing of different communities. In religious education lessons, there is often emphasis placed on learning about the beliefs and traditions of other faiths and cultures. However, the school recognises the need to more effectively prepare children for life in a multi-cultural society and is in the process of improving provision to develop the children's understanding and tolerance of other people's religious convictions and cultural traditions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. This is a strength of the school. The school is a very caring community and staff place a high priority on the pupils' welfare. Very good arrangements are in place to ensure pupils' well being, health and safety. Staff know the pupils well and maintain very good relationships with them. Pupils are confident to approach adults with their concerns and they receive sensitive and effective guidance. Each child is valued and treated with respect. This has a beneficial effect upon the pupils' attitudes to their work and helps to develop their self-esteem and to encourage their progress and personal achievement.
45. The school's procedure for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. All members of staff, including support staff and midday supervisors have received appropriate guidance on how to respond to welfare issues and are aware of the procedure to follow should they have any concerns about a pupil. Further training and awareness raising, on child protection issues, is carried out annually. At the weekly staff meeting staff are updated on current situations. There is close liaison with specialist agencies to provide additional support for pupils and their families. Arrangements to promote pupils' health and safety are good. The caretaker and cleaning staff work hard to maintain a high standard of cleanliness throughout the school. The caretaker conducts regular inspections of the buildings, accompanied by representatives from the governing body to ensure the safety of pupils and staff. First aid arrangements are very good. There are members of staff available who hold a recognised qualification in First Aid, and parents are notified promptly if their child becomes unwell during the school day. Teachers and non-teaching staff supervise the pupils well throughout the school day, before morning school and at the end of the afternoon session. The lunchtime break is well managed and provides a valuable social experience. The cook and kitchen staff ensure that pupils are catered for appropriately when preparing school meals, including those with special diets. Members of staff work hard to ensure pupils feel secure and comfortable, so that they can make the most of their time in school.
46. Parents of all pupils are informed of their children's progress throughout the year. They receive a written "Nutshell" report half way through the year and a full written report at the end of the academic year. However, inconsistent information is provided as to what the pupil

needs to do to improve further. Pupils with special educational needs receive good levels of educational support. Teachers' concerns about individuals are identified at an early age and parents are fully consulted. Individual education plans include targets for personal and academic development and pupils are offered support in the classroom and at other times through working in a small group with another teacher. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is assessed carefully and systematically and records make it possible to track this progress through the school and to adapt their targets and their work to meet their learning and personal needs. Reviews of progress for pupils with special educational needs meet requirements and parents are well informed

47. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Pupils are fully aware of teachers' high expectations of them and good emphasis is placed upon rewarding positive behaviour. Good behaviour stars, stamps, badges and certificates are awarded to pupils. These achievements are celebrated in the weekly newsletter to parents and at the Friday good work assemblies. Unacceptable behaviour, should it occur, is dealt with in a constructive manner which enables pupils to identify right from wrong and build self-esteem. Teachers and support assistants manage lessons very effectively so that all pupils are able to concentrate on their work. The school has clear strategies to respond to any incidents of bullying or harassment should they occur. No such incidents were evident during the inspection. The school has established appropriate procedure in the event of a pupil requiring exclusion from school. Pupils of all ages help adults in a variety of ways by setting out and tidying resources, managing equipment during assembly, and delivering registers to the office. Each day one pupil from Year 6 is nominated as an "Ambassador" to the headteacher to help with specific duties.
48. The school actively encourages good attendance by ensuring that pupils enjoy coming to school. For a significant number of children, the hugely successful "Breakfast Club" provides a great start to their day. It provides them with a good breakfast, an opportunity to play board games, work on a computer and to participate in an aerobics session. Attendance and punctuality are very well monitored. The secretary and headteacher check absences and late arrivals on a daily basis. Parents are contacted immediately where there is a concern. The school works closely with the Education Welfare Officer who makes home visits when necessary. Pupils with good attendance records receive "Attendance " badges. Despite these very good systems and the high level of support offered to families, pupils' attendance is still below the national average.
49. Under the guidance of the relatively recently formed assessment management team, the school has made significant improvements, in assessing pupils' work. There is a whole school approach and teachers are informed well. The comprehensive baseline assessment for children in the reception year gives detailed information on each child's attainment and is appropriately used to identify at an early stage, each child's learning. Assessments of older pupils are based on a range of non-statutory and statutory tests in English and mathematics. The results of both statutory and non-statutory tests are recorded and analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in curricular provision and in individual and group attainment. This good information is yet to be used effectively to inform future planning, predict pupils' attainment and set targets. For example, the school has started to use the information to set group targets in English and numeracy and where relevant, and changes are beginning to be made to the curriculum to target any weaknesses. These good assessment systems have yet to result in improved standards of attainment. The school has developed a programme specifically to promote better reading skills for which additional helpers have been trained to support. Booster classes, for Year 6 pupils, in literacy and numeracy have been set up. The

under achievement of boys has also been highlighted. However, the good procedures evident in English and mathematics are not yet in place in other subjects. There are samples of moderated work for English and mathematics that clearly demonstrate the agreed National Curriculum level descriptors and this supports teachers when they are making formal assessments but there is no such facility for other curriculum areas. The marking of pupils' work to acknowledge specific skills and identify future targets for improvement is not consistent throughout the school. Information from tests and teacher observations is used well to ensure the early identification of pupils with learning difficulties and to place them on the register of special educational needs.

50. The pupils' personal development is monitored continually by class teachers through informal discussions and by observations at break or at lunch times. There are good arrangements for children starting in the nursery and reception classes and they have opportunities to visit the school before formal entry. Pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary education and they have chances to visit their chosen school before transfer. During their last few weeks in school, Year 6 pupils, begin various modules in "Moving on Up" which they will continue during their first few weeks at secondary school. Class teachers liaise closely as pupil's progress through the school and there is a good exchange of information. Members of staff know their pupils well, relationships are good and these have a positive impact on pupils' learning and achievements.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. The schools partnership with parents and carers is good. Fifteen parents attended the parents meeting and 83 parents returned the questionnaire out of 374 sent out. The vast majority of responses indicated good support for the school, the attitudes and values it promotes and almost unanimously that the children like school. There were a significant minority of those that returned the questionnaire that felt that the school did not provide good information, was difficult to approach and did not provide a good range of out of school activities. These opinions cannot be supported as the school provides good quality information, a wide range of out of school activities and parents were seen to approach the school, at different times during the inspection, with all being well received.
52. The school prospectus is updated annually and provides good information about the school and the expectations of the children. Consultation with parents has taken place since the amalgamation, which the vast majority feel has been well managed. The school sends out a weekly Newsletter and Newsflash that provides parents and carers with good information about homework and the events taking place in school. The Newsflash also celebrates the successes of the children including good attendees who are to be rewarded at assembly.
53. The school provides twice yearly reporting on the children's progress, these give parents a clear picture of what the child is able to achieve. There are consultation evenings for parents to talk to the teachers about their child. The attendance at these evenings is improving from a low base. The school has embarked on a target setting interview cycle with parents. All nursery parents and those new to the school have an interview on entry to explain the expectations of the school.
54. The school has some parents who help in school and who contribute to the children's learning both at school and at home. The school has built up strong links with family learning to promote opportunities for parental involvement in school and active learning with the children. This range of initiatives has been welcomed and they are successful in encouraging an increasing

number of parents to undertake a more active involvement with the school. The school would welcome a higher degree of support in this area in order to enhance the education of the children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The leadership and management of the school is very good. The headteacher provides a very clear and very purposeful sense of direction for the school. She is well supported by the senior managers and staff of the school. The governing body has a clear confidence in the very good quality of her leadership. In a relatively short time two separate schools have been moulded into a single unit with a clear sense of purpose. The school has very clear aims which have been translated into the creation of a good quality learning environment which combine high levels of care for pupils who live in a challenging environment with considerable material hardship. The school has worked purposefully in creating an atmosphere where pupils feel the need to work hard and can enjoy the feeling of success. Teaching and support staff gathered from both the previous Infant and Junior schools have a good sense of teamwork and are clearly engaged in establishing this good learning environment together. The amalgamation has led to the appointment of a new senior management team which is working well together and leading the school in the right direction.
56. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's work are good. The school development plan is a useful tool for improvement and is established following full consultation with staff and governors. The headteacher and senior management team work effectively with coordinators to monitor the work undertaken all subjects. Procedures for monitoring children's work are good, but are not yet utilised as effectively as they might be to drive up standards of attainment. Good procedures are in place for monitoring the quality of teaching, and samples of children's work are monitored at regular intervals. Here more attention needs to be given to the consistency of teachers' marking to ensure that more useful and purposeful comments are made to children about how to improve their work.
57. The governors are a newly constituted body following the amalgamation of the two former schools, and they are appropriately involved in the life and work of the school. They have established clear development planning procedures. They have a clear understanding of their roles and know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They carry out their statutory duties effectively. Designated governors attend relevant courses and are well informed about their roles and responsibilities. They are led by an experienced chair of governors who is supported by a thoughtful and effective vice-chair. Both have a great interest in the school and its immediate community. They have a strong commitment to raising awareness amongst parents of their role in supporting their children's learning.
58. The Governors are keen to ensure that the school receives best value for the spending decisions it makes. They have established good procedures to ensure that their plans for development are properly financed. The school is only in its first complete financial year as a single school. It has accrued a substantial surplus with which it plans to build a link corridor to join the two formerly separate school buildings. This is seen as an important development to enable children and staff to pass safely and easily between the buildings. Day to day financial planning and control are effective. All school routines are appropriately established and the school administrative officers provide good support for the school.

59. The management and administration of special educational needs is very good. The coordinator keeps careful records and children are supported very well. Teachers and support staff work well with the coordinator to ensure that the children's learning needs are met effectively.
60. Staffing levels are good and both teaching and support staff are well deployed. The school has made a conscious decision to maintain a high level of staffing provision. The accommodation is spacious and well used. It is maintained to a high order of cleanliness. The space is used effectively and has been instrumental in promoting a sense of teamwork amongst the staff. A single staff room has been established and a community room is put to good use for a wide variety of purposes. It is used effectively for briefing meetings of teaching staff, led by the headteacher, and non-teaching staff, led by the deputy head, at which all colleagues are told of particular needs of identified children. A new computer suite has been established and parents have decorated the security cabinets used to house the equipment. There is a meeting room for parents close to the main entrance which is frequently in use. Learning resources are adequate and are generally of good quality.
61. Although standards of attainment in the core subjects are low, the school has done much to establish a good learning environment for the children and, in a short time, it has created a great desire to succeed. A rich and wide range of curriculum and other opportunities have been established in this newly amalgamated school. Effective procedures are in place to ensure continued improvement. The school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to improve the school further, the headteacher, governors and staff should:-
- (1) Take steps to improve the children's standards of attainment in English, mathematics, science and information and communications technology, because they are well below the national expectation of children aged eleven.
 - (2) Make better use of the good information gained from assessments of children's progress to take their learning forward.
 - (3) Ensure that the quality of teacher's marking is consistent and shows children what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

78

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0%	11%	29%	53%	7%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	329
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		182

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4	125
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	6

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	50
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	60

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0%
National comparative data	5.2%

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.6%
National comparative data	0.5%

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	34	21	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	18	24
	Girls	15	17	19
	Total	34	35	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	62 (n/a)	64 (n/a)	78 (n/a)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	22	20
	Girls	15	19	16
	Total	33	41	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	60 (n/a)	75 (n/a)	65 (n/a)
	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	33	18	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	10	15
	Girls	16	15	16
	Total	32	25	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (n/a)	49 (n/a)	61 (n/a)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	10	15
	Girls	16	15	16
	Total	32	25	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (n/a)	49 (n/a)	61 (n/a)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	37
Indian	1
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	218
Any other minority ethnic group	99

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.1
Average class size	23.5

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	270

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	26

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	2	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	628672
Total expenditure	546925
Expenditure per pupil	1402.37
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	81747

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 22.2%

Number of questionnaires sent out	374
Number of questionnaires returned	83

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	30	0	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	41	1	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	40	5	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	47	4	4	1
The teaching is good.	61	34	4	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	29	14	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	22	10	5	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	25	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	45	40	11	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	58	35	5	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	36	1	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	28	13	6	13

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

62. At Firs Primary School nursery and reception children are in the Foundation Stage. The nursery class operates a morning and an afternoon session taking children on a full time and part time basis. There are two reception classes which take children from the nursery and children who have had little or no pre school experience. When children start nursery, their level of attainment is very low for their age. Children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and physical development and in these areas of learning attainment is broadly in line for their age when they leave reception. Children make good progress in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development but attainment is still well below that expected for their age when they leave reception.
63. The children's good progress is a result of good teaching and a good curriculum, which places an emphasis on helping the children to learn the necessary language and social skills. The curriculum also addresses the limited range of experiences a significant number of children have prior to starting school. Children are settled into school life quickly and they soon develop positive attitudes to school and learning. Teachers in the nursery and reception classes have a good knowledge and understanding of young children's needs and how they learn. Staff provide a good range of worthwhile learning activities for the children to select from, in addition to direct teaching sessions. All activities are firmly based on the early learning goals, using the stepping stones as a framework for good planning. They manage the children very well so that classrooms are calm and ordered and children can concentrate on their activities. Teachers keep a check on how well the children are progressing in their learning. This helps them plan work that moves all the children on in their learning. The teachers and support staff work effectively together to give the children a good foundation to their learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. Most pupils start school with poor skills in personal, social and emotional development. Many children have little experience of being away from home in a new and busy environment. By the time they leave the reception classes all pupils have made very good progress relative to their starting point and will reach the expected goals for their age by the time they enter Year 1. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers in the nursery and reception classes work hard to successfully create a warm, welcoming atmosphere where children feel secure, valued and able to concentrate on learning. Children are effectively taught good manners, how to take turns, to share and to care for equipment, books, toys and themselves. They quickly learn to work in large and small groups. Clearly established routines in the nursery and especially in the reception classes ensure children work well together and respond to instructions. Relationships with each other and all adults are very good, mainly because teachers and support staff work well together and provide good role models. The staff relate to and interact positively with the children and show them how they should conduct themselves in different situations. At the end of the lessons they take responsibility for putting away resources and generally tidying up the classroom. The behaviour and attitudes of children are very good. They take a great interest in what is going on around them. They are praised when they try

hard or achieve something new and this builds their self-esteem and their confidence to try again.

Communication, language and literacy

65. Most children start nursery with very poor communication, language and literacy skills. Many children receive very little support from parents at home, many of whom lack skills in this area themselves. All children make good progress in this area of learning but most will not meet the expected learning goals for their age by the time they enter Year 1. The quality of teaching is good. This is evident in the skilful use of questions that not only give the children confidence to speak and respond in group activities, but also give them enough time to respond. Children make good progress in their speaking and listening skills. All staff ensure that they make instructions clear and precise. Children are effectively taught to listen carefully. Role-play is used well to develop children's communication skills. For example, the castle in the nursery, the shop and clinic in the reception classes provide valuable opportunities for children to develop their language skills. Adults model sentence construction well and ask pertinent questions to extend the children's vocabulary. Many children do not have access to books at home, so there is a welcoming book area in the nursery and reception classes where children can enjoy a range of fiction books. All children are encouraged to take books home. Teachers have introduced a home school reading partnership to encourage parents to share a book with their child. This not only makes an impact on developing in children a positive attitude to books, but also enables staff to develop positive working relationships with parents. In both the nursery and reception classes, children enjoy looking at books and share them readily with other children and adults. In the nursery, children are taught how to handle a book correctly and to follow the sequence of pictures. In the reception year children identify print, follow it from left to right and learn that print has meaning. The children show interest and enjoyment in books and shared reading sessions. They concentrate well whilst stories are being told to them. This was seen in the nursery where the teacher's expressive reading skills captivated children's attention and gave them real enjoyment of the story about a monster. Staff have introduced appropriate elements of the literacy hour in the reception year through "big books" to develop knowledge of how books are written. As a result, many children know that an author is a person who writes stories and that the illustration on the cover of a book gives an indication of what the story will be about. Many children have not handled a pencil prior to joining the nursery. In the nursery and reception classes staff provide a writing table with a good supply of pencils, crayons and paper to encourage them to practise pencil and paper skills and to form letters. In the nursery some children can write their names independently but most are still at the stage of copy writing. Most children in the reception year attempt to write for different purposes. For example, they write a shopping list. Higher attaining children can write a simple sentence using known words. For example one child wrote, "The goat pushed the troll in the water." Children in the reception year learn the alphabet and begin to understand the different sounds made by each letter. This was seen in a shared reading session where the teacher successfully used the big book "Jasper's Beanstalk" to encourage children to identify the initial letter sounds "j" and "b. Higher attaining children can read a range of familiar words and sentences independently.

Mathematical development

66. When children start school their mathematical skills are very poor. A wide range of appropriate activities is provided in the nursery and reception year to promote the acquisition of the skills

necessary for mathematical development. Numbers are well displayed around classrooms with opportunities for counting, sorting, matching, adding and subtracting. Teaching is good. Teachers and support staff constantly introduce new language. An example of this was seen when a group of children in the nursery were introduced to circles, triangles and squares. The teacher encouraged the children to remember the names of the shapes through perceptive questioning. Nursery children learn to match the patterns on pairs of socks, count the five points on a star shape and understand the directions “up” and “down”. In the reception year children learn to count to 10 by singing “Ten Current Buns in the Baker’s Shop.” They extend their mathematical development of subtraction with practical activities involving children representing the current buns. Through a very good practical activity, direct teaching and questioning by the teacher some children can write a number sentence, “8 take away 3 = 5” for example. She is very skilful in assessing children’s understanding of the process by getting them to explain how they came to the answer. This has a positive impact on their learning. Higher attaining children can find on more than a number, for example one more than $8 = 9$. Although children make good progress in their mathematical development, standards are much lower than expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. Children start school with levels of general knowledge that are very low. While children make good progress in this area of learning, the attainment of the great majority remains well below that expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. The quality of teaching is good. Staff ensure that children have opportunities to develop their powers of observation and the ability to ask questions as part of their natural curiosity. Nursery children plant seeds and small plants and know that seeds and plants need soil to grow. They examine plants for colour, size and shape but very few children can name the roots. Children in the reception year extend their observational skills further when they use magnifying glasses to examine caterpillars in a jar. This also extends their knowledge and understanding of living things. They plant seeds in plant pots and observe the growth of the emerging plants. Staff encourage children to develop enquiring minds by asking, “What do seeds need to grow?” and “Will the seeds we planted outside grow quicker or slower than those planted inside?” There are fish in a tank for the children to observe and care for. Most children in the reception develop an understanding of the passing of time as they place themselves on a simple timeline to show arriving at school, going to assembly and going home. More able children can draw a simple imaginary map of Red Riding Hood’s journey to her grandmother’s house to develop their geographical skills. Children in the reception year develop simple skills at using a computer. Many can use the mouse and to click on objects and use it to draw.

Physical development

68. When they enter the nursery, children have very poor physical skills. There is little open space in the locality where children can play out of school hours. Children make very good progress in this area of learning and many will achieve the expected standard by the time they enter Year 1. All children have access to the large outdoor play area, which is imaginatively set out. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use the outdoor area very well to provide a range of activities for children to develop confidence, co-operation and co-ordination. Children appropriately use the good selection of large play equipment in this area and were seen riding on tricycles and using other wheeled equipment following road and other playground markings. Children have opportunities to climb and slide on the fixed outdoor frame to develop gross motor skills. There is a covered area where children can sit and talk and areas for developing

imaginative play and mark making. Children have planted bulbs and seeds in the garden area and good use is made of this to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Effective teaching ensures that they have good opportunities to improve their manipulative skills using scissors, holding pencils, and brushes, threading, completing jigsaws and using small construction equipment. There is good provision for children to play with a variety of resources, such as sand and water trays in order to develop their co-ordination. There are fixed hall times for physical education. In a reception year physical education lesson children were given responsibility for setting out and putting away their own pieces of large apparatus. They carried the equipment with care and co-ordination. In the lesson they showed a satisfactory level of attainment in balancing on their hands both on the floor and on the apparatus. They moved around the hall and used the different pieces of apparatus with confidence. In another lesson children successfully held and rolled a large ball to a partner demonstrating a satisfactory level of co-ordination and accuracy.

Creative development

69. Most children's creative development is very poor when they start in the nursery. Good provision and teaching ensures that children make good progress in their creative development but many will not reach the level expected by the time they move to Year 1. Children have daily opportunities to become engaged in creative work. They paint, print, and create collage pictures using a variety of natural and man-made materials. Good opportunities are provided for children to explore texture, colour and shape. For example, nursery children stick different types of seeds on paper and use magnifying glasses to examine the detail of the pictures they have created. In the reception year children demonstrated originality in rolling out and making shapes in salt dough. Frequent opportunities are provided for singing, which children undertake with enthusiasm and enjoyment. This was seen in the reception year where children sang nursery rhymes beautifully. In the nursery children are given opportunities to play a selection of percussion instruments. In one lesson they participated in a well-structured game to guess the hidden instrument the teacher played. Later, the children took turns to say the names of the instruments and play each one. In the reception year children are encouraged to develop an awareness of tempo through shaking a percussion instrument. They try hard to keep in time to the class counting slow and fast and develop an understanding that fast does not have to be loud!

ENGLISH

70. Standards in English have improved since the last inspections and this improvement has accelerated in the last two years. This improvement has not been sufficient to lift standards to the level of those achieved nationally and they remain well below the national average. Nevertheless standards in English have risen since the last inspection and the improvement can be traced to a number of factors. The National Literacy Scheme has been successfully implemented and is followed by all teachers. This means that there is now a coherent approach to the teaching of English throughout the school and that learning is built on systematically. Children in the upper part of the school are grouped, according to their attainment, for English lessons, and this enables teachers to more precisely target the learning needs of their pupils. Targets are set for groups of children and individuals and children's progress is now tracked both through the completion of nationally recognised tests at the end of each school year from Year 2 to Year 6 and by the collection of portfolios of individual children's work. These improvements have been influenced by the effective and enthusiastic leadership of the two co-ordinators. They have been able to monitor teaching both directly and

by scrutinising planning and have provided helpful feedback to colleagues. They have also given model lessons, demonstrating teaching points, particularly as they relate to the National Literacy Scheme. The recent improvement in resources in the form of textbooks and reading books has broadened the scope and interest for teachers and children. The school's efforts for improvement are hampered by the high levels of pupil mobility, when children join the school in their early years, but leave before the end of Year 6.

71. The literacy levels of most children entering the school are very poor and from this low base they do make at least satisfactory progress to the extent that by the time they are eleven, children's standards in English are above those found in similar schools. Progress throughout the school is not always consistent and tends to be better at the end of each Key Stage, in Years 2 and 6. This is as a result of good teaching, and, in the case of Year 6 pupils, an extra teacher for literacy, which allows children to be taught in smaller groups of similar ability levels. The high quality teaching in a relatively small group given to pupils with special educational needs in Year 6 helps their progress. The good level of high quality support staff and the good provision generally means that children with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is not their first language generally make satisfactory progress.
72. There is a difference in the attainment of boys and girls and this widens as children move through the school. The attainment of eleven year old girls at the school in 2000 was in line with the national average while boys were performing at the level expected of ten year olds. The school is aware of these differences and has implemented a series of appropriate measures to improve the performance of boys. For example, reading material likely to be of particular interest to boys has been purchased and boys have been targeted to use specific computer programs designed to develop literacy skills. The progress of boys is being carefully tracked and parents informed. Past national test papers have been analysed to find common areas of weakness in the children's understanding. These measures, along with good new assessment procedures, have only recently been adopted and have not as yet made any real impact on learning.
73. In the national tests for seven year olds in 2000, the most recent for which comparative data is available, the school's results in reading were well below average compared to all schools nationally, and below the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher level in reading was below that of similar schools. The school's results in writing were similar to those in reading, with the exception of the percentage of pupils gaining the higher level in writing which was above the average for schools with in a similar context.
74. In the national tests for eleven year olds the school's results were well below the national average, but above the average for schools with a similar intake. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher levels in the tests was also well below the national average, but above the average for similar schools.
75. The inspection findings largely concur with the test results for 2000 and indicate that standards in reading are higher than in writing. However the standards of literacy observed during the inspection were slightly higher than those indicated by the test results because the levels of speaking and listening, not covered in the national tests, are higher than the other areas of literacy. By the time children reach the age of eleven, their standards are close to those expected nationally. The comparatively high standards in speaking and listening can be attributed to good teaching. Teachers throughout the school use the positive behaviour code to assist their, mostly, very good management skills to gain good behaviour and attitudes from the children. Children of all ages listen carefully to teachers and pay close attention in lessons and

assemblies. They listen politely to other children speaking, occasionally breaking into spontaneous applause, and this helps to build the confidence and self-esteem of the speaker and means that children throughout the school have the confidence to speak in group activities. Opportunities for speaking and listening are planned across the curriculum and pupils have many chances to work collaboratively, discussing ideas. For example a group of Year 6 children were asked to re-arrange their class library books. Lessons where children have the opportunity to speak to their class about a range of topics are fixed in the timetable. Teachers use questioning very well to extend children's responses in lessons. A teacher in a Year 6 class used open ended questions skilfully to extend pupils' ideas as they debated the merits of wearing school uniform. Teachers use the introductory and plenary sessions of lessons to allow children to speak to the rest of the class, explaining their work. Children are given the opportunity to speak in assemblies and on special occasions like the poetry evening when some Year 6 pupils read their own poems in front of an audience. Children speak well explaining the plot and nature of characters in stories they have read but limited vocabularies still inhibit the ability of pupils to express themselves precisely. Nobody in the Year 6 class for higher attaining children could say what 'inarticulate' means even when presented with it in context.

76. By the time they are seven some children read confidently and can explain what they have read and discuss the characters in the story. Others have limited strategies and are only just beginning to read. Most children do seem positive about reading and many say they read at home. Pupils in Year 6 show a wide range of ability in reading. A few high attaining children read fluently with expression. They are able to talk confidently about plot and characters. They are able to locate information using the library system and the contents pages and indexes of books. They are able to skim through material to find specific points. When presented with new material they are able to assimilate the information and answer questions which require them to make inferences. However, many children are far less confident. Many children do not read widely and few are able to name authors other than those they have been directly studying. One Year 6 pupil stated his favourite author was 'Grid' Blyton. Although children have reading diaries, the home-school reading relationship is not well developed and few have regular entries from parents. Nearly all pupils do have a good phonetic knowledge and are able to tackle the recognition of new words. This is built systematically though the school. Year 1 pupils identify 'sm' words. Year 4 pupils working in a group with a learning support assistant work on vowel digraphs and learn to read words with prefixes 'de', 're' and 'pre'. A lower attaining pupil in Year 6, who was not able to name an author or give a coherent account of the story she was reading, was nevertheless confident and successful in pronouncing *Zoologicus Extinctus*.
77. Midday supervisory assistants listen to children read and although they are not able to hear individual pupils regularly enough to make a major impact, this is a popular activity with the children who enjoy reading to them.
78. By the time they are seven children are still printing. Only a half of the children in Year 6 classes are writing in a joined script. The style of handwriting is often undeveloped and the presentation of work is generally poor. Handwriting is not given sufficient attention. Teachers do include handwriting sessions but these are often perfunctory and tend to reinforce bad habits rather than good. There is too little direct teaching of handwriting where teachers emphasise direct letter joins and general points of neatness such as making letters the same height.
79. Children are given regular spellings to learn for homework but teachers do not check spelling sufficiently in written work. There are relatively few examples of teachers correcting pupils' spelling or expecting pupils to correct their errors. Teachers' expectations of spelling levels are

not yet sufficiently high and consequently, even more able Year 6 pupils regularly make mistakes, such as 'probely' for 'probably', 'tuching' for 'touching' and 'lite' for 'light'. An able Year 4 pupils sets her story in a 'littel cottge'. Even in displays of work such as musical instruments, made by Year 5 pupils, one of the children's explanatory notes says that the child put seeds in to 'mack a nise'.

80. Children's ability at punctuation is better. By the time they are seven two thirds of pupils have a clear idea of writing in sentences and more able pupils are beginning to use speech marks and separate items in lists with commas. By the time they are in Year 6, most pupils write confidently in sentences although many do not yet always use capital letters for proper nouns. Many pupils understand the idea of a paragraph and most are able to write an account in two or three paragraphs. Most pupils understand the use of speech marks although only a minority regularly start a new line when a new person speaks. A few, higher attaining, pupils are beginning to use colons and semicolons.
81. Children are given the opportunity to write for a range of purposes, but use information and communication technology relatively rarely, and then mostly for word processing. Children in Year 2 write their own version of traditional stories and write instructions for activities such as making a bed. By the time they are in Year 6 children have the opportunity to write on such diverse topics as biography, bias in journalism and structured arguments on the merits of school uniforms. The general standard of writing by the time pupils are aged eleven is well below that expected of pupils of that age. Few, if any, pupils are writing at a higher level and many are writing at levels well below those expected nationally. Teachers' expectations are too low and older pupils are given too few opportunities to write extended pieces against a time limit. The school has acknowledged this by introducing extended writing lessons into the timetable but these lessons seldom offer the opportunity for children to do a piece of extended writing in a limited time. Children get the opportunity to model opening paragraphs or parts of stories. The timing of these lessons for the last hour of the day often means that children are not at their most productive. Teachers almost invariably mark the children's work and offer very encouraging remarks, on occasions rather more flattering than the work deserves. Frequently these comments are not accompanied by any suggestions as to how the work could be improved. A five line piece of fairly ordinary description by a pupil in Year 4 received the comment "What a super description – you've really used the text well and used some excellent words." There was no mention that the word whole was spelt incorrectly or that a capital letter was inappropriately used. A Year 5 child wrote "your car is MUTch Bigger than ours." It is ticked but not corrected and receives a 'well done' from the teacher. This approach does much to build the confidence and self-esteem of the child and helps in creating a positive atmosphere but is not so successful in improving standards in writing.
82. The school has used the services of a professional poet who has given workshops and performances of his work. This has had a positive effect on the children's work in poetry and there are several examples of good work throughout the school. "My shadow is as light as a feather. She wears a jacket made of black leather" wrote a Year 4 pupil. Some Year 6 pupils are to have their poems published.
83. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and in half of lessons is good or better. Good teaching is spread throughout the school although it occurs most frequently in Years 2 and 6. It has a positive impact on the children's learning. Teachers throughout the school have a secure knowledge of the National Literacy Scheme and are beginning to use it well. Its successful implementation, supported by the good class management skills of teachers, help

create a positive atmosphere where pupils feel valued and where standards of literacy are improving, albeit from a low base.

84. The school has introduced a family literacy scheme for pupils in Year 4. This offers the opportunity for a small group of children to have good quality tuition in literacy, on occasions, working with their parents.

MATHEMATICS

85. In the national tests in mathematics for 11-year olds in the year 2000, standards are very low in comparison with the national average. They are well below average when compared to similar schools. No children attain standards which are above those expected for their age. There was a significant difference in the performance of boys and girls, in these test results, with girls performing significantly better than boys. A large number of boys, with special educational needs, entering the school shortly before the tests are identified as contributing to these disappointing results. Results kept by the school show that in the national tests, in mathematics, in recent years a gradual improvement has been made, with the exception of 1998, but the rate of improvement is lower than that shown nationally. The school expects to improve on last year's mathematics results in the forthcoming national tests, but its efforts are hampered significantly by high levels of pupil mobility. The work of children currently in school indicates that attainment is currently below the average expected for their age.
86. By the age of seven children's standards of attainment in the mathematics tests for 2000 are well below the national average, and also well below average when compared to similar schools. The percentage of children achieving higher levels of attainment in the tests, is also below average. Work observed in Year 2 indicates that standards of attainment are improving, but remain below average.
87. Children enter the school with very few mathematical skills. Progress made by the majority of children during the Foundation stage and at both Key Stages is good, but it is not sufficient to enable them to achieve standards of attainment in line with those expected for their age. One of the contributing factors is that some teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of what the children are capable of doing.
88. Children with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Teachers make good use of committed and enthusiastic support staff and plan work, which is challenging but appropriately matched to children's abilities. Some children have individual education plans, which recognise the child's difficulty in learning mathematics, and divide the learning programme into small steps. The teachers monitor the progress of children with special educational needs well.
89. The quality of teaching in mathematics is sound overall and good in Key Stage 1. Teachers are familiar with the National Numeracy Strategy, which in the main they apply effectively. This enable the children to make effective use of their developing numeracy skills both in mathematics and in other subjects. Planning is good providing appropriate challenges for children at all ability levels. Planning is well matched to national guidelines. In most classes the teacher shares the learning objectives of the lesson with the children. In the main good use is made of the plenary to sum up what has been learned.

90. Teaching is good when lessons proceed at a brisk pace with an effective balance of direct teaching and discussion. In addition, the plenary session is used well to summarise what was learned and share examples of the best children's work. The classes in Key Stage 1 had interesting displays in the classrooms which include counting aids such as hundred squares, number lines, "washing lines" and posters and labels with mathematical language. In one reception class there was a good quality display of "butterfly sums" where children had painted spots on butterflies and used these as a counting activity. In another class children sung counting rhymes at the end of a story session. In Key Stage 2 one high ability year 6 class had a challenging oral and mental starter, which was conducted at a brisk pace. The teacher demanded attention from the children and encouraged a faster rate of response. The children enjoyed the challenge. This teacher also chose subject matter, which was of interest to boys. In a lesson focussing on teaching about modes and range the teacher chose to use football results as the content. This strategy helped to maintain the interest of boys. This supported the school's and coordinator's view the attainment of boys is an issue for development.
91. Where examples of unsatisfactory teaching were seen teachers expectations were too low and they did not plan sufficiently challenging activities for children of different abilities. The quality of prepared worksheets was poor and the unsatisfactory management of challenging behaviour meant that some children spent too little time in lessons engaged in learning activities. Children's productivity and the pace of their work was slow and the quality of their learning was reduced. Opportunities to make key points in the plenary were lost by allowing children to call out unchecked. There was no real summary to the lesson or opportunity to share good examples of children's work with the class.
92. Children's attitudes to mathematics are good. They are keen and eager to learn and respond well to the range of tasks set by teachers. In oral and mental activities they listen carefully to teachers and respond eagerly and enthusiastically. In the written work they settle quickly and stay on task. They cooperate well with each other and younger children make good use of mathematical apparatus to support their learning. The behaviour of children was very good in all classes except some in Year 3.
93. The school's use of ICT to support teaching and learning in mathematics is not well developed. Some children as part of the "Breakfast Club" have the opportunity to develop their mathematical skills from a structured commercial package. Little was seen of ICT being used to support teaching and learning in the daily mathematics' lesson. No evidence of the use of ICT was seen in children' books.
94. The quality of the assessment is satisfactory overall. The school has established good procedures to assess children's progress in mathematics. However, many of these processes are new and as yet, the school does not make consistently good use of this information. In some classes teachers make good oral assessments, judging children's progress, commentating on the progress being made during the lesson and telling children what they have to do to improve. However this is not uniform throughout the school. Its use across all classes is uneven. The quality of marking in mathematics is also uneven. Books are marked regularly with supportive comments. However the quality of layout and presentation in the books is poor. The marking comments do not address this and fail to focus sufficiently on telling children what they have to do to improve this aspect of their work.
95. The subject is well led and managed. The school has a clear policy and guidelines, which refer to aims and objectives, resources, teaching methods, special educational needs, cross-curricular links, record keeping and marking. The coordinator works with teachers to track the

performance of children at both key stages. Individual targets are set each year and termly targets are shared with parents. These are also displayed in classrooms. This aspect of monitoring is good. The coordinator has highlighted the underachievement of boys and is developing strategies to address this weakness. The curriculum coordinator has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. She has clear strategies for its improvement and development.

96. Resources for the subject are generally sound and are used effectively. There is a sufficient supply of number lines, hundred squares and other counting aids in all classes. Some classes have made good use of displays of key words and tables or number bonds. Some classes have posters with items of mathematical relevance and interest. Insufficient use of calculators was seen during the inspection. There is a central supply of larger mathematics equipment. The coordinator bids for money for resources. This year she received the full amount of the bid.
97. The school makes good provision for parents to further their mathematical skills and understanding. Some parents attend a weekly adult Numeracy Club in which they take the opportunity to develop their own mathematical skills both for their own benefit and to support their children's learning. This is a significant step in involving parents in their children's learning.
98. The newly amalgamated status of the school makes it difficult to make a secure judgement about improvement since the last inspection, particularly improvement in Key Stage 1, for which there is little information available, but standards in mathematics have improved since the last inspection, particularly in the last two years. Improvement for older pupils is satisfactory, despite the fact that standards attained are still well below the national average for eleven-year-olds. There has been a steady rise in the percentage of pupils gaining the expected levels of attainment by the age of eleven.

SCIENCE

99. In the 2000 national tests for children aged seven and eleven, standards of attainment were well below the national average, and below average when compared to similar schools. A higher than average percentage of seven year old pupils were assessed at above the nationally expected level in science, but the percentage of eleven year old children gaining the higher level was below average. The results for children aged eleven reflect the introduction, just before the tests, of a group of children with special educational needs who had a negative effect on the overall performance of children in that year. Children make progress over time, though at a slower rate than the national average, and achieve well in relation to their low skill level on entry to the school. The attainment of children currently in the school is below average, for children aged 11 and well below average for children aged 7. It is generally better than that reflected in the tests of 2000 and demonstrates the commitment of staff to develop children's learning in science. There are realistic targets for improvement, but efforts to achieve these are hampered by a large percentage of children who join the school in their early years but leave before the end of Year 6.
100. A weakness common to both schools in the last inspections was the lack of effective assessment procedures to monitor the attainment of children and the progress that they make as they pass through the school. This has been partially addressed by the recent introduction of an assessment sheet to gather information about the standards of work that

children attain. However, this information is not yet being used to set manageable targets for individual children to improve their work. Other weaknesses for the junior school were a lack of a scheme of work and insufficient opportunities for children to plan and carry out their own investigations. There is now a whole school scheme of work that ensures teachers have enough guidance to plan their work.

101. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with teachers showing secure subject knowledge, preparing their lessons well and trying hard to ensure that the work suitably matches the ability of all children. These features all have a positive impact on the quality of the children's learning, which is also satisfactory. In Year 1, the teachers ensure that children have the opportunity to be involved in practical activities to develop their scientific knowledge and understanding of their senses, and how they can be used to explore the world around them. As children pass through Year 2, they learn how to handle simple scientific equipment carefully and safely and to take part in discussions about scientific topics. This was evident in a lesson for Year 2 children in talking about, and investigating, how some materials can be altered by squashing, bending and twisting. Within these activities the children show enjoyment and interest and are keen to take an active part. However, despite the teachers emphasising the correct use of scientific language, most of the children have only a limited vocabulary and this hinders their ability to develop the skills of being able to talk about their work in an appropriate manner. There is also a problem caused by the children recording their findings in a topic book, along with history and geography, which results in some confusion in children as to what is their science work. Consequently, by the time that they are 7, most children do not show appropriate skills in carrying out a simple fair test or in recording their findings in a variety of ways.

102. Teachers ensure that older children are given the opportunity to learn how to handle a wider variety of scientific equipment and resources to develop their knowledge and understanding. There is good use of questioning to explore and develop children's knowledge and understanding of scientific ideas, as was seen in lessons in Year 6 on investigating reversible and irreversible changes in materials. Teachers emphasise the ways of making a test fair, as was evident in a lesson for children in Year 4, delivered by the co-ordinator, on investigating the relationship between shape and water resistance. Some teachers do this better than others and, as a result, children are not developing their understanding of fair testing in a consistent way through the school. In most lessons the children are eager to answer questions and show enjoyment in their work, especially practical activities. The teachers provide opportunities for children to work together to find out for themselves but, these are not always adequately structured to enable them to make suitable progress in their investigative skills. Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what children can achieve and this is seen when poorly presented work is accepted as being satisfactory. The development of the children's ability to record their findings in a variety of ways is hindered by them having to present work in lined exercise books, which are not suitable for close observational drawings or detailed scientific diagrams. There are not enough opportunities for children to be involved in activities that develop the investigative skills of making evaluations and conclusions based on prior scientific knowledge. As a result, by the time that they are 11, most children do not show an appropriate ability to identify the need for a fair test or to be able to plan and carry one out independently of the teacher. Through the school there is some use of children's skills of using information technology to enhance their work in science, but this is currently insufficient and is an area for further development.

103. The curriculum that is offered to the children is satisfactory, being broad but in need of better balance so that there are more opportunities for them to be involved in adequately structured investigative activities. The leadership and management is good with the co-ordinator having a clear view of the subject's strengths and weaknesses, which has enabled her to create a suitable action plan to improve provision. The progress of children with special educational needs and with English as an additional language is good, as a result of the well-structured support that they are given. The activities given to these children are well matched to their abilities, because their strengths and weaknesses are well known by all staff, who work well together as a team. The needs of the more able children are suitably met and they are given work that enables them to make satisfactory progress and achieve well. There is suitable use of literacy skills by children in their report writing and in their labelled scientific drawings and diagrams. Children also show that they are able to make satisfactory use of their numeracy skills, as was seen in the work of children in Year 6 to take accurate temperature readings from a thermometer in an investigation into how they could increase the speed of a solid dissolving into a liquid. The school has recently begun to collect information about the progress made by children as they pass through the school, but this information is not yet being used to set manageable targets for individual children to improve their work. Each term there is a day when all classes focus on science, which is effectively raising the profile of science within the school and also developing the positive attitudes that the children show to the subject

ART AND DESIGN

104. The attainment of seven year olds is broadly in line with those seen nationally for this age group. This finding is the same as at the last inspection. It is not possible to make a reliable judgement about the quality of work for children aged eleven because only a small amount of work was seen. There was insufficient evidence in children's sketchbooks and very little work on display. At the last inspection standards were judged to be in line with national expectation.
105. In Key Stage 1, children are given a variety of media in which to express their ideas. For example, children in Year 1 paint large self-portraits using thick brushes and pre-mixed paint. Their work shows satisfactory observational skills and that they have considered different colours for different features. They fold, curl and roll thin card to make simple sculptures. In Year 2, pupils twist, join and bend sheets of paper to form large creature like sculptures. They also use clay to sculpture dragons. This involves pushing and pinching the clay to create the features of the dragon. The higher attaining children create quite distinctive features on their models but many children show a lower level of detail. In Key Stage 2 the small amount of work seen in sketchbooks is disappointing. In many cases drawings lack the proportions and detail expected for children of this age. Children in Year 5 are beginning to observe objects carefully and to use a variety of drawing pencils to show a good use of line and tone in their work. This is seen in sketches of fruit and still life compositions. There is very little evidence of the work of famous artists making an impact on the children's own work and on their cultural development.
- 106 Teaching is good overall at Key Stage 1. Better teaching, is characterised by good subject knowledge, high expectations and challenge, the use of questioning to assess pupils' understanding, demonstration, and children being encouraged to evaluate their work and make modifications. These features have a positive impact on the standards of work children produce. This was clearly seen in a Year 2 lesson where the paper sculptures of animals

were of a high quality. Good teaching leads to children making good progress and attaining well in relation to their starting point. The teaching of drawing skills is inconsistent through the school. The school has recently introduced national guidelines to help teachers plan the teaching and learning of skills and techniques in a more systematic way. At the moment it is too early to judge the impact of this initiative. The use of ICT is underused in developing artwork. Classrooms are well organised for artwork but resources need to be improved to widen the range of work that can be covered.

107. Children's attitudes and behaviour are consistently good in all art and design lessons. They listen well to instructions and sustain interest and motivation in the tasks given. They work well as individuals and in groups, share resources and take responsibility for setting out and tidying away. Such good behaviour impacts on the learning that takes place and the progress children make.
108. The art and design co-ordinator is relatively new to her post and has had limited time to make an impact on the teaching and learning of the subject. However, she is very enthusiastic, has made a good start and has already identified where improvements need to be made to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Teacher's planning is monitored, as are pupil's sketchbooks and displays of artwork. She has planned an arts focus week, involving artists and sculptors from the School of Art, to raise the profile of art in the school. The art curriculum is enhanced by the provision of extra-curricular activities.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109. Levels of attainment in design and technology for children aged seven and eleven are broadly in line with those expected nationally for children of these ages.
110. Most children make satisfactory progress including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is not their first language, who are aided by individual help from classroom support assistants. There is no obvious difference between the progress of boys and girls and they frequently work together in pairs or in small groups designing, making and evaluating products as diverse as sandwiches, purses and model fairground rides.
111. There have been satisfactory improvements in the provision for design and technology since the previous inspections. There is now a co-ordinator for design and technology and he has introduced a nationally recognised scheme of work which is followed throughout the school. This means that there is now a coherent approach to the subject, that children are working at appropriate levels and their skills are systematically developed. It also means that National Curriculum requirements are met, which was not previously the case with the classes of older children. Design and technology now enjoys a higher profile at the school. At the time of the previous inspections there was insufficient evidence for judgements on attainment to be made. This is no longer the case.
112. Children through the school show appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding of the subject and a developing range of skills. By the time they are seven most children are able to produce plans and designs with suggestions for suitable materials. They select appropriate tools and use them safely and appropriately in making picture frames, measuring wood accurately and cutting it correctly. They carefully consider the qualities of a variety of materials: waterproofing, colour pattern and texture before making a replica of Joseph's coat of many colours. The model houses made by younger children are good examples of the subject being used to support other areas of the curriculum. Many of these are of good quality

and show good attention to detail. Each child gives his or her model the same number as their actual house. They develop their printing skills making designs for the walls. Opening the front door reveals a character from their literacy lessons and the models are then used as parts of large geography displays introducing maps and plans. Finally they develop their speaking and listening skills as they evaluate the quality of their model and make suggestions as to how it might be improved. Children in Year 3 make sandwiches and consider matters of hygiene and a healthy diet. They conduct effective surveys into the various qualities and value for money of a variety of produced sandwiches. Children's relatively poor literacy and presentation skills means that the design stage of work is not as good as the making stage.

113. Children in Year 6 show good measuring skills and take considerable care in producing a basic framework for their fairground rides. They are able to set up a functional system of cogs and gears to drive the individually designed moving rides. These are to be driven by electric motors. Year 5 pupils develop a storyboard style of design using 'blow up' and three-dimensional drawings to record their plans in considerable detail.
114. The quality of teaching and learning in design and technology is satisfactory overall. Teachers use the new scheme of work to plan the work, setting clear learning objectives which they share with the children so that they have a clear idea of what is expected of them. They emphasise safe, correct and hygienic handling of tools and materials. Teachers have good class management skills and this results in pupils behaving well and working together well in small groups, concentrating for sustained periods of time. This means that the teacher feels able to discuss ideas with individual pupils and give suggestions for improvement and development. This helps the progress of all pupils and particularly those with special educational needs. These pupils are further helped by the teacher's good use of high quality support staff who work with small groups of pupils. Teachers use good questioning skills to challenge children's thinking. "How could a plastic bottle be used to make a tube?" asked a teacher of Year 5 pupils designing musical instruments.
115. Teachers are beginning to make appropriate use of information and communication technology to support their work in design and technology. Year 4 children use the Internet to look at chair designs.
116. Teachers' expectations are not always high enough. They are not demanding enough of children and on occasions offer excessive praise for modest achievement and this limits children's progress. A display of musical instruments made by Year 5 children showed work of poor quality, some instruments being little more than plastic bottles poorly painted. There are also occasions when teachers use worksheets of their own design which are of poor quality in terms of presentation and these do not encourage children to present their own work well.
117. Teachers do take opportunities to develop the speaking and listening abilities of their pupils, giving them chances to explain their designs, particularly in plenary sessions. There are sufficient resources to support the curriculum in design and technology.

GEOGRAPHY

118. Children reach the standards of attainment expected of them by the ages of seven and eleven. They make appropriate progress in their learning, throughout the school. Overall, the school has made sound improvement since the last inspections.
119. By the age of seven, the children have a satisfactory understanding of their own locality and its relation with the wider world. For example, children are taken into the local environment and study vehicles in the immediate area. They are able to effectively compare and contrast the urban area where they live with the island location of Struay. They readily recognise the differing features of both locations. They are able to describe local buildings and show an appropriate understanding of their respective purposes. They use simple skills learned in other subjects in geographical work. For example, they use skills used in mathematics to make simple block graphs and are able to sort creatures with feathers from those without.
120. By the age of eleven, children show a developing understanding of how people can both improve and damage the environment. They are able to describe the water cycle with a good degree of accuracy and they know about how rivers drain. They can use an Ordnance Survey map effectively, recognising some of the symbols and they can write directions appropriately. There is evidence of children using word processing skills accurately to present finished pieces of geographical work.
121. Children with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language are included effectively into geography lessons. They generally undertake the same work as the rest of the class, sometime benefiting from good quality support from classroom assistants who have a clear understanding of what the children are expected to learn.
122. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers build on pupils' previous knowledge and plan lessons appropriately. Resources are used effectively to explain concepts and ideas. In lessons, children are managed well and are given appropriate opportunities to use their developing literacy and numeracy skills
123. The coordinator has a love for the subject and is keen that it should be interesting and enjoyable for the children. At the present time, the subject is not monitored as rigorously as it should be. The good assessment procedures which the school has in place for English and mathematics do not yet extend to work in geography. Marking of children's work does not consistently tell them what it is they need to do next to improve their work.

HISTORY

124. Standards of attainment are in line with those expected for children aged seven and eleven. Their knowledge and understanding of history topics is sound and they can recall facts effectively. Because of the newly amalgamated status of the school it is difficult to make an overall judgement about improvement in history since the last inspections, but satisfactory overall improvement has been made.
125. By the age of seven, children develop a growing awareness of people's lives in the past. They know about the facts of the Great Fire of London and have developed work for a school assembly around the story. They know about the lives of some famous people from the past.
126. By the age of eleven, children have covered a wide range of historical topics. They have an appropriate understanding of the life and times of the Ancient Greeks. They can place a

detailed map of Greece in its place in the world and they know the difference between primary and secondary historical evidence. They know about different aspects of government and can detail the difference between a democracy and an aristocracy. Children in Year 4 have a clear understanding of the Romans, and use their understanding effectively, in religious education, when writing some of the events of Holy Week in the form of a diary of a Roman Soldier. There are also interesting topic books on Tudor times, created by children in Year 4.

127. Children make appropriate use of their developing literacy and numeracy skills through history. Their understanding of the passage of time is enhanced by the use of time lines, and links with literacy are encouraged through the identification of primary and secondary historical evidence.
128. Children with special educational needs are included appropriately in all history lessons, and are able to work alongside their peers. Where they are supported by classroom assistants, the quality of that support is good. It enables the children to make good progress in their learning.
129. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. Lessons are generally appropriately planned and pupils are managed well in history lessons. There are no major weaknesses in the teaching, but aspects of teacher's marking show inconsistency. Marking is very supportive and encouraging to the children – sometimes praising children on work that is only of average standard – but it does not effectively show children what it is they need to do next to improve.
130. The coordinator is effective and provides good leadership and management. He is keen and interested and has good subject knowledge. There are appropriate plans for development in place, especially to increase the number of historical artefacts for children to examine and use. At the present time the procedures for assessment of pupils progress and the monitoring of teaching of history are not so effective as those procedures for mathematics and English. The subject is resourced appropriately.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

131. By ages of seven and eleven, most children are not attaining the expected standards. However, as a result of recent improvements, which have not yet had time to positively affect standards, children throughout the school are now making satisfactory progress and achieving well. The important factors in this improvement have been the creation and effective use of a computer suite, the good leadership of the subject and the use of a specialist teacher to develop the skills of children and expertise of teachers.
132. The last inspections indicated that common weaknesses included the lack of a suitable scheme of work and underdeveloped assessment procedures. There is now a whole school scheme of work that gives teachers clear guidelines as to the work to give the children. Assessment procedures are being developed but are not yet effective in enabling teachers to set targets for individual children to improve their performance. All children have timetabled lessons in the suite, which are leading to an improvement in standards. The work of the co-ordinator and the specialist teacher has been central to this improvement. They have been successful in raising the confidence and expertise of teachers and the knowledge, understanding and skills of the children, including those with special educational needs. Initially, the emphasis was on developing the children's basic computer skills in using the keyboard and mouse correctly. This has now been widened, so that children are

involved in a variety of activities to develop their skills in word processing and other aspects of the subject.

133. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with teachers being well-prepared and placing appropriate emphasis on giving children opportunities to learn and practice the basic skills of the subject. When they start Year 1, suitable attention is given to developing children's knowledge, understanding and skills in the subject and they are taught that computers can be used to make words and pictures and to assemble text. As they pass through Year 2, children learn how to change the type and size of text and to retrieve, process and display information. The children's attitudes are positive, being well-behaved and showing interest and enjoyment in their work. They treat the equipment carefully and, when working in pairs on the computer, they collaborate well, which supports their social development. The progress in learning for older children continues to be satisfactory, as a result of their receiving direct teaching of basic skills in the computer suite. In a Year 4 lesson there was effective demonstration by the teacher of how to enter information onto a spreadsheet, which led to children making good gains in this aspect of their learning. In a good quality lesson for children in Year 6, the teacher's expertise enabled children to make good progress in their understanding of how to use text, images and sounds to create multimedia presentations. By the time that they are eleven, children are able to use information technology to enhance some of their work in other subjects, but the school recognises that this is in need of further development. Children show confidence and enjoyment when using computers and are achieving appropriately, being able to suitably use information technology to organise and present their ideas.
134. There is good management and leadership of the subject by the co-ordinator, whose efforts are supporting a raising of standards throughout the school. The curriculum offered to the children is satisfactory, but there is recognition of the need to provide more opportunities for them to experience activities involving control. There is good resource provision in terms of computers but there is a need to purchase a wider range of software to support work in other subjects. The accommodation provided by the ICT suite is good and its use by parents to develop their skills is one of the ways that the school maintains the good links that it enjoys with the community.

MUSIC

135. The children reach standards that are average for their age by the time that they are seven and eleven, making satisfactory progress and achieving appropriately as they pass through the school. A particular strength is in the development of children's singing, in which they are tuneful, confident and very enthusiastic.
136. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with the children being provided with a range of interesting and worthwhile activities to develop their musical skills. Teachers plan their lessons well and are well organised, so that they are able to effectively demonstrate the musical techniques they wish their children to perform. In Years 1 and 2, the children learn to sing a range of songs from memory and, in so doing, demonstrate suitable rhythm and pitch. They handle instruments with care and work together well when performing. Children in Year 2 show a suitable ability to plan, rehearse and perform simple tunes. In another lesson, they effectively learned how to use musical notation and made good progress in their ability to use suitable musical vocabulary to talk about their musical activities. Children in a Year 4 lesson showed suitable ability to sing a two part round and accompany their singing with a glockenspiel. By the time that they are 11, the pupils can sing expressively with controlled

phasing and with practice are able to improve their performance. The children respond well to their music lessons, showing much enjoyment in their singing and when experimenting with sounds. They listen very attentively, are keen to follow the teacher's instructions and are willing to listen to and appreciate the musical talents and contributions of other pupils. Since the last inspections, the school has improved provision so that children have sufficient opportunities to evaluate their own performance and that of others. There has also been an improvement in planning procedures so that work is now better matched to the ability of children.

137. There is good leadership and management, which has improved since the last inspections. The co-ordinator has very good expertise and is able to support and enthuse colleagues in their musical activities. The school provides pupils with a wide variety of extra curricular activities, which include recorders and choir, to further advance their skills in the subject. At Christmas they have opportunity to sing carols to elderly residents and to take part in the school concert for parents. Children also have opportunity to work with visiting musicians and to listen to and appreciate performances by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

138. Standards for children aged 7 and 11 in dance, games and gymnastics are broadly typical for their age. All pupils, including those with special educational needs show sound achievement. Swimming lessons begin in Year 2 and continue up to Year 5. There is no teaching of swimming to Year 6 pupils. Therefore, it is not possible to make a reliable judgement as to how many pupils reach the expected attainment level by the age of 11. Planning for outdoor and adventurous activities is well developed through a residential visit to Stables in Bromsgrove. The picture is similar to that reported in the last inspection. However, at that time, it was found that resources were satisfactory and they are now judged to be good.
139. By the age of seven most children show enthusiasm for physical education, listen carefully to instructions and participate well. Overall the teaching is satisfactory, but showing some good features in Key Stage 1. In gymnastics, Year 1 children can roll sideways along a mat and the more confident pupils can complete a forward roll showing starting and finishing positions. They are able to link the roll to two other movements to develop a simple sequence. The quality of their work improves when the teacher encourages them to "point and stretch" legs and arms. In Year 2, children show increasing control when balancing on different parts of their body. They are able to hold their position, as they clearly understand the instructions given by the teacher. Her effective planning, subject knowledge and organisation are very influential in the success of the lesson and in the very good progress made by the pupils. Very good teaching was seen in a Year 2 dance lesson where the children achieved well. The teacher stressed the importance of keeping hands and arms in the correct position and to keep toes and knees pointed. This "eye for detail" has a significant effect on the quality of movements performed. Common strengths are the teachers' use of praise, demonstration and stressing the importance of evaluation. These elements help children to develop confidence and to improve their performance.
140. The children's enthusiasm for physical education continues throughout Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. In gymnastics and dance a common weakness is that children are not consistently taught the importance of refining and rehearsing their movements to develop increasing control and quality. Children demonstrate their work but not enough attention is given to ways of improving movements to move their work forward. The effect of

this is that pupils do not reach their full potential. Children cooperate and learn the importance of teamwork. In a Year 4 games lesson, they use a skipping rope to tie themselves in a group of six and then find ways of travelling in a line across the playground. The teacher allows the groups to experiment and intervenes where necessary to ensure that everyone is contributing. This makes an impact on their movements; they are more orderly and considerate of others. They thoroughly enjoy the task and co-operate well with each other. Year 6 children are able to work independently, with a partner and in a group. In gymnastics they take responsibility to set out large apparatus and they are made responsible checking safety aspects before it is used. They develop a sequence of movements that allows them to travel along, under and over the apparatus. However, many movements, balances and shapes lack good control. All children are aware of the need to stretch muscles prior to vigorous exercise and children in Year 6 understand the benefits of a raised heartbeat to healthy living.

141. Subject leadership is good. The two co-ordinators are well informed and enthusiastic. There is an appropriate policy for the subject and national guidelines have recently been implemented which provide good guidance for teachers' planning. The co-ordinators check the teachers' planning and informal support is given when necessary to help them plan their lessons. Resources are good and these have a positive impact on the range of activities children experience. The physical education curriculum is supplemented by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are organised by several members of staff. The subject makes a good contribution to children's social development as they learn to relate to others and take responsibility

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

142. Standards are in line with the levels expected in the locally agreed syllabus for children aged seven and eleven. Children, including those with special educational needs, make appropriate progress with their learning in religious education. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspections
143. Children in Year 2 gain a simple understanding of aspects of Jewish life. They know about the Torah and some of the major festivals. They also have an satisfactory level of understanding about some Old Testament stories. Interesting work on Joseph and his coat of many colours is seen in the children's workbooks.
144. As children pass through Key Stage 2, they gain an insight into other world religions. Children in Year 4, for example show a developing understanding of the important elements of religious life for Hindu's. They know some important names of religious buildings and artefacts and also have a developing knowledge of some Hindu stories. They also know significant symbols for Sikhs and have a clear understanding of the 5K's. As children move into Year 6, they display a greater understanding of Judaism, knowing the significance of the Bar Mitzvah Celebration and the importance of the Rabbi to followers of Judaism. Throughout the key stage children show an increasing awareness of the significant details of the life of Jesus, charting his progress to the Cross and the symbolic importance of the Last Supper. Children in Year 4 make good use of their knowledge of the Romans (undertaken in work in history) to write some of these events through the eyes of a Roman soldier.
145. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers show appropriate subject knowledge and manage children well in lessons. This leads directly to children showing good levels of interest in their work and a willingness to question and search for clear understanding. Children are supported well and this has a positive impact on their learning..

146. Research skills and the compilation of glossaries of important terms show good links to work in literacy, and the subject makes many good links to the children's personal development.
147. The subject is coordinated by a member of staff who has held the coordinating role for a very short time. She is keen to gain a thorough understanding of the needs of the school to deliver the subject well. She is rightly reviewing documentation and undertaking an audit of current resources. Currently resources are generally adequate, but may benefit from an increased range of appropriate artefacts to bring the subject alive for the children. At the present time there is insufficient monitoring of children's work and progress and these are areas which require further development.