

## INSPECTION REPORT

**ST JAMES' C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Oldbury

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 131673

Headteacher: Mr C Hanrahan

Reporting inspector: B Matusiak-Varley  
19938

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> January – 1<sup>st</sup> February 2001

Inspection number: 230361

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: Voluntary Controlled

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Wolverley Crescent  
Oldbury  
West Midlands

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Wendy Dyke

Date of previous inspection: September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19938	B Matusiak-Varley	Registered inspector	Art and design Foundation Stage English as an additional language	Characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key Issues for action
14756	J Lovell	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
7084	J Haslam	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology	
27700	A Giles	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Science Physical education	Curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
22157	M Rousell	Team inspector	English Music	
22054	N Wales	Team inspector	Special educational needs Geography History Religious education	

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>30</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St James' Primary School is a newly amalgamated school as a result of Whiteheath Infant and Saint James C of E Junior School joining together. The school has only been operating as a primary school with a nursery for 18 months and is still in the early stages of development and therefore faces many challenges.

St James' School is a large Church of England voluntary controlled primary school with 437 pupils on roll. Twenty-five per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, but not all pupils claim their entitlement and it would appear that this number is much larger. Thirty per cent of pupils are on the Special Educational Needs Register, this is well above the national average. The school has provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, although all of these pupils are taught in mainstream school, and are supervised by the special educational needs co-ordinator. There are five pupils with statements of special educational need. There is a very small minority of pupils (10 pupils) who have English as an additional language, but their levels of competence are average and they benefit from the normal curriculum. One of these pupils is supported by a teacher from the Ethnic Minority and Travellers Achievement Division for one morning per week. The school does not experience significant problems with pupil mobility. The school has a 30 place full-time equivalent nursery. Pupils are taught in 14 single aged classes. Children's attainment on entry is well below that expected nationally, especially in language and communication, mathematical development, personal and social development and aspects of physical development.

On his appointment the headteacher had to bring together staff from two different organisational cultures. The deputy headteacher has only recently returned to the school, having been seconded to support a school in difficulties.

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

The school has clear priorities for improvement and provides a caring and secure learning environment for its pupils based upon Christian principles. The school is committed to raising standards. The school has the potential to do well but, as yet, whole school strategies for raising standards are not fully embedded due to the short time of the school's existence. Standards are below national averages by the time that pupils leave school, with the exception of science where standards are in line. Pupils' achievements are broadly satisfactory, but there is underachievement in Key Stage 1. Teaching is very variable, ranging from excellent to unsatisfactory, but is satisfactory overall. As a consequence learning is satisfactory but could be better, especially in Key Stage 1. The leadership and management of the headteacher are good. The headteacher has a clear sense of educational direction, he is well supported by his governors and is working very hard to unite the staff in a corporate vision to move the school forward. The leadership of key staff is satisfactory overall, with some co-ordinators providing better leadership than others. All staff are hardworking but, as yet, are not fully benefiting from one another's expertise to further improve the quality of teaching. The school is providing a satisfactory standard of education but standards are not high enough in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education at the end of Key Stage 1, and English, mathematics and information and communication technology at the end of Key Stage 2, although standards are improving. The management of the school has rightly recognised this as an area to be urgently addressed. The school is committed to equality of opportunity for all of its pupils including them in all activities. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- By the time that pupils leave school they achieve well in religious education, science, art and design, design and technology and music.
- There are examples of excellent teaching in Year 2 and Year 6 and the teaching in the nursery is very good, providing pupils with a good start to their education.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and their behaviour is generally good.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The school generally cares for its pupils and good assessment procedures are in place.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher are good and a clear educational direction has been provided for the school.

### What could be improved

- Standards at the end of both key stages are not high enough and there is significant underachievement amongst all groups of pupils in Key Stage 1. Standards in Key Stage 2 are improving in English, mathematics and information and communication technology but, as yet, remain below national average.
- Time allocation to teaching reading, writing and spelling is not sufficiently well used, and pupils are not making the required gains in learning. Consequently the time allocated to science is low.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is better at Key Stage 2 than it is at Key Stage 1. There are occasions when pupils' individual education plans are not rigorously used in planning. Higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged, especially in Key Stage 1.
- Teaching, where it is satisfactory or lower, has weaknesses especially in the teaching of basic skills.
- There are weaknesses in the monitoring of curriculum planning by the senior management team. Insufficient guidance is offered to teachers to enable them to identify opportunities to develop pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology in subjects across the curriculum.
- There is still work to be done in uniting the staff as a team in order to effectively implement the headteacher's vision for the school.
- Attendance rates are unsatisfactory.

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

Although standards are rising at the end of Year 6, standards need to be further improved in both key stages and pupils are underachieving in Key Stage 1.

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

Saint James C of E Junior School was last inspected in September 1996, and Whiteheath Infant School was inspected in April 1997. As St James' is a newly amalgamated school it is not possible to comprehensively comment on the findings of the two previous reports. The commonalties for improvement pertinent to the two schools, have been: to improve curriculum planning, to improve the quality of teaching, to improve the use of assessments undertaking stringent data analysis, to develop the role of curriculum co-ordinators and to raise standards in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. In relation to these issues, the school has made satisfactory improvement overall, but further work needs to be done on raising standards, especially in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology at the end of both key stages. Whilst the teaching has improved, there are still further improvements to be made in the teaching of basic skills.

### STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				<b>Key</b>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	n/a	n/a	E	E	well above average      A
mathematics	n/a	n/a	E	E	above average            B
science	n/a	n/a	D	C	average                    C
					below average            D
					well below average      E

Based upon national test results in 2000, standards were well below averages in English and mathematics and below in science. In comparison with similar schools, standards were well below averages in English and mathematics and in line with averages in science. Inspection findings show that whilst standards are improving and science is in line with national averages, standards in English and mathematics are still below national averages as opposed to being well below. Standards in science are better than in English and mathematics because teachers have worked very hard at developing pupils' skills of investigative and experimental science,

and the science scheme of work in Key Stage 2 gives very clear indication of how scientific skills are to be developed in lessons. Standards in religious education meet the expectations defined in the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in information and communication technology are improving but are below expectations of eleven-year-old pupils.

By the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, standards are broadly in line with those achieved nationally and all groups of pupils make good gains in learning. In speaking and listening and writing, standards are below national averages, but pupils' achievement in relation to their prior attainment is satisfactory overall. Higher-attaining pupils and those with English as an additional language achieve appropriate standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing. In mathematics, pupils are making satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment, but there are weaknesses in problem solving, shape, space and measure and data-handling. In science, pupils make good gains in learning and the best progress is made in experimental and investigative science. Attainment is high in art and design and music and achievement is good in design and technology although standards are still in line. In history and physical education, standards are broadly in line. In geography, standards are below expectations. Pupils enter the school with very low levels of attainment and in spite of examples of very good teaching in the nursery and Year 2, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 remain well below national averages in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. In art and design, design and technology, music and physical education, standards are broadly in line with national averages. In history and geography, standards are below expectations of pupils of this age. In religious education, standards do not meet the requirement of the locally agreed syllabus and in information and communication technology standards are below those expected of pupils of this age. There is underachievement in Key Stage 1 in almost all subjects of the National Curriculum. This is because basic skills are not effectively taught in the reception classes and in Year 1.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and often good in the nursery, it is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2, although pupils' rates of progress are inconsistent. The best achievement in all subjects is in Year 6. The school has met its targets in English and mathematics for 2000.

#### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, especially when teachers set challenging tasks for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. All teachers manage behaviour well, and this has a positive effect on learning. Pupils are friendly, courteous and polite.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is satisfactory. Opportunities for pupils to become independent learners could be improved. Relationships are good.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory overall. There are a number of pupils who do not attend school regularly.

#### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged up to 5 years</b>	<b>aged 5-7 years</b>	<b>aged 7-11 years</b>
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory

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

During the week of inspection, both literacy co-ordinators were absent. The school had two supply teachers, one of whom is on a long-term contract. Two teachers in Key Stage 2 are newly qualified.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. During the week of inspection 4 per cent of teaching was excellent, 15 per cent very good, 28 per cent good, 41 per cent satisfactory and 12 per cent unsatisfactory. The best teaching was seen in the nursery, Year 2 and in Year 6. Overall in the reception classes and in Year 1 there is a weakness in the teaching of basic skills of reading, writing, number and information and communication technology and this is a contributory factor to the low standards that pupils attain. A strength in teaching in both key stages is the management of pupils. Excellent examples of teaching were seen in Year 2 science, Year 6 literacy and art and design and in these classes pupils make good and often very good gains in



learning. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is better in Key Stage 2 than it is in Key Stage 1 because teachers use individual education plans more rigorously in their lessons. Examples of unsatisfactory teaching were seen in both key stages. Teaching that is satisfactory overall, nevertheless, has weaknesses and this contributes to the uneven profile of learning throughout the school.

#### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Broad with generally good learning opportunities provided. Extra-curricular provision is very good. However, the curriculum is not sufficiently balanced and extra time allocated to teaching basic skills and extended writing is insufficiently well structured to be effective.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall. The special educational needs co-ordinator is very hard working and supports pupils and staff well. However, support staff are not always effectively deployed in Key Stage 1 and, on occasions, teachers do not use individual education plans in curriculum planning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. These pupils are appropriately supported by the Ethnic Minority and Travellers Achievement Grant Staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Provision for moral and social development is very good. Provision for cultural development is good. This contributes to preparing pupils well for life in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Pastoral care is good and academic progress is appropriately monitored. However, pupils in Key Stage 1 who have special educational needs and those who are above average attainers are not always sufficiently challenged.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory overall. Parents are regarded by the school as true partners in learning, but not all of them support their children's learning at home.

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

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher gives clear education direction, but composition of the senior management team needs to be reviewed in relation to members' expertise in implementing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across the curriculum. Co-ordinators generally fulfil their duties well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. All governors are hard working, supportive, regular visitors to the school and understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. They fulfil their statutory duties well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school has made an effective start in analysing national and internal assessment data in an attempt to further raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. In spite of the many problems facing budget allocation, the governing body and headteacher manage resources well. The principles of best value are applied as far as is possible. However, there are times when support staff could be more effectively used.

Whilst the headteacher provides a clear educational direction for the school, there is still work to be done in ensuring that staff operate as a unit. Individually, staff are committed to raising standards, but there are inconsistencies in practice.

The school has a full complement of knowledgeable staff. Accommodation is good and spacious, displays are attractive and resources are satisfactory overall. Further resources are needed for pupils with special educational needs and the ratio of computers to pupils is low.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The majority of parents think that the headteacher is approachable and listens to their complaints and suggestions.</li> <li>• The school provides a good quality of education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parents would welcome more information on the children's progress.</li> <li>• Homework is inconsistently set.</li> <li>• A minority of parents feel that pupils with special educational needs are not always effectively supported.</li> <li>• Behaviour is unsatisfactory.</li> <li>• Extra-curricular activities are unsatisfactory.</li> </ul>

Inspectors support parents' positive comments and agree that provision for pupils with special educational needs could be improved in Key Stage 1. However, inspectors find that reports about pupils' progress are detailed, homework is effectively set in Key Stage 2, but homework in Key Stage 1 could be more rigorously set. Inspectors disagree with parents about pupils' behaviour and extra-curricular activities and judge behaviour to be good and provision for extra-curricular activities to be very good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. This is a newly amalgamated school. References to previous report findings and trends over time will not be made as they are not applicable and only generic issues referring to the two schools will be made.
2. The 2000 national results show that standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics were well below national averages in comparison with all schools. In comparison with similar school, standards in reading and mathematics were well below average and in writing standards were below average. This picture is broadly reflected in Key Stage 2, where in comparison with national averages standards were well below in English and mathematics, and were below national average in science. In comparison with similar schools, standards were well below average in English and mathematics, but in science standards were in line.
3. Analysis of test results in Key Stage 1 shows that there is a high percentage of pupils attaining the lower levels in reading, writing and mathematics. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels is very low. On the basis of teacher assessments, the school's performance in science was well below the national average.
4. By the end of Key Stage 2, test results show that there is a high percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 and below in English, mathematics and science although in science a small percentage of pupils are attaining Level 5. In both key stages there is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls.
5. The management of the school has recognised that there has been a need to raise standards and test results have been analysed, assessments have been put in place, pupils in Key Stage 2 have been set according to ability in English and mathematics, in an attempt to raise standards. The headteacher has placed strong teachers at the end of both key stages and effective monitoring of teaching throughout the school has taken place. This clearly demonstrates the school's commitment to raising standards. Inspection findings judge that, as a result of the recent amalgamation, an effective start has been made at raising the rates of pupils' achievements and subsequent attainment, but that it will take some time before the benefits of strategic planning will impact on standards.
6. The school is well placed to succeed if the necessary steps are taken in relation to raising levels of attainment in Key Stage 1 by the rigorous teaching of basic skills, using individual education plans in setting challenging tasks for pupils with special educational needs, further challenging higher-attaining pupils in both key stages, restructuring curriculum time allocation to ensure that reading and writing is effectively taught and identifying links across the curriculum to develop pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.
7. Pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and the early years of Key Stage 2. When they are withdrawn by the special educational needs co-ordinator they make satisfactory progress but the work that she does with them is not rigorously followed up in lessons. In both key stages, the very small minority of pupils with English as an additional language makes sound gains in their learning. This is because their levels of competence in English allow them to access the curriculum and teachers generally match tasks to their needs. As pupils reach the later years of Key Stage 2, particularly in Years 5 and 6, they begin to make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress. Overall, progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 2 because teachers are skilful at planning tasks that suit the needs of these pupils. The school has an appropriate concern for the pastoral, moral and social development of the pupils but there are occasions when teacher expectations of what the pupils might achieve are too low. Insufficient emphasis is placed on developing the pupil's literacy skills in the early years of Key Stage 1 and this causes difficulties in pupils recording their work in other curriculum areas. The school ensures that these pupils are fully included in all areas of school life and is to be commended for this. However, the lack of development of their literacy and numeracy skills has a negative impact on their ability to fully develop their skills in other curriculum areas. In Key Stage 1, pupils are withdrawn from lessons to receive extra support, and whilst they make sound short-term gains in learning, they do not have sufficient opportunity to apply what they have learnt to other areas of the curriculum when they return to class, and this results in unsatisfactory progress overall because their learning is fragmented. There are occasions when the time of support staff, is not used efficiently or

effectively, and pupils with a statement of special educational need often benefit from the help they receive from support staff both in class and in withdrawal groups. Often these staff are able to work with other pupils with a special need and on those occasions these pupils benefit. In a Year 4 class, when there was insufficient support for both pupils and teacher these pupils made unsatisfactory progress. There is evidence that teachers differentiate the work given to different groups of pupils but often this work is not linked to the targets of pupils with special educational needs as identified in their individual education plans. Too little attention is given to developing, for example, their writing skills in subjects such as history, religious education and geography and sometimes they are given unchallenging tasks such as drawing a picture or colouring in a worksheet. When these pupils work with the special educational needs co-ordinator, they are effectively supported because she knows their academic and behavioural needs well. Due to the fact that the school has only been in existence for 18 months, there is evidence to suggest that already links with specialist agencies such as the behavioural support staff, and staff funded through the ethnic minority travellers achievement grant from the local education authority are having a positive effect on raising pupils' standards and rates of achievement.

8. The school faces many challenges in raising standards. The percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register and eligibility for free school meals is high. Pupils enter the reception class with levels of attainment that are very low in all areas of learning. Inspection findings show that overall they make sound gains in their learning in the nursery due to the very good teaching, but their rates of progress are inconsistent in the reception class, due to the lack of emphasis of teaching basic skills. Overall rates of learning are satisfactory in the foundation stage but they could be better. Pupils in the foundation stage do not attain the early learning goals, although their achievements are broadly satisfactory, but there are weaknesses in the teaching of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Inspection findings show that by the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is well below national averages in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science and achievement is unsatisfactory overall, although there are signs of improvement in Year 2 because of the good and better teaching.
9. Pupils' attainment is below expectations in history and geography. In religious education and information and communication technology pupils attain standards below those expected nationally and achievement is unsatisfactory overall. This is largely due to the lack of opportunities presented to pupils to record their work and use their skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national expectations in art and design, music, design and technology and physical education and pupils achieve appropriately in relation to their prior attainment.
10. The principle reason for underachievement in Key Stage 1 is the fact that basic skills are not consistently taught in reception and in Year 1 and this results in teachers in Year 2 having to rectify the problems by going back to teaching basic reading, writing and number skills. In the one year that pupils spend in this class they cannot catch up in spite of the good and better teaching received. This weakness in attainment continues into Key Stage 2 and is the main contributory factor to the low standards that pupils attain in English and mathematics. Higher-attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 are underchallenged because, as yet, teachers do not have high enough expectations of them as assessment data is not used sufficiently well to plan the next stages of learning. Teachers rely too much on national guidance of when to introduce aspects of the literacy and numeracy hour in the reception class, rather than relying on their professional judgements, of providing suitable and challenging activities as and when pupils need them. Pupils with special educational needs make inconsistent progress in Key Stage 1 because their individual education plans are not always consistently used in planning, and whilst they make satisfactory gains in learning when they are withdrawn and supported by the special educational needs co-ordinator and support staff; this is not consistent in whole-class lessons. Overall their progress is unsatisfactory. The school has rightfully recognised this as an area which needs to be addressed.
11. There is a very inconsistent picture of achievement in Key Stage 2 because of the variable standards in teaching. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make sound gains in their learning but standards in spelling, speaking and listening, writing and mathematics are below those expected nationally, with pupils who are higher attainers achieving standards which are broadly in line. Standards in reading are broadly in line with those expected of eleven-year-olds. However, in relation to their prior attainment, sound gains are made in learning, and achievement overall is satisfactory, due to the fact that the quality of teaching is better at the upper end of Key Stage 2, especially in Year 6. There is evidence that standards are improving and this is partly due to the fact that the school has set pupils according to ability based upon information gained from assessments. Tasks are matched more appropriately to pupils' needs and this contributes to the better gains made in learning. In science, at the end of Key Stage 2, standards are

broadly in line with national averages and all groups of pupils make good gains in their learning. This is because the science co-ordinator has provided good leadership in her subject. She has placed appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' skills in the experimental and investigative science, and the scheme of work clearly reflects the subject-specific skills that teachers need to teach which underpin the various attainment targets. This helps teachers to plan their work. The co-ordinator has also ensured that the subject is appropriately resourced and that assessments of pupils' knowledge are well recorded.

12. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, and pupils' achievements are good in relation to their prior attainment, but there are weaknesses in the recording of pupils' work, especially in the area of extended writing. All groups of pupils make satisfactory and often good gains in their learning.
13. The school has made an effective start at raising standards in information and communication technology, but as yet these standards are below those expected nationally and pupils' progress is inconsistent, but is unsatisfactory overall. Not all teachers are regularly using information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in different subjects. Teachers' knowledge is variable, ranging from good to unsatisfactory, but it is unsatisfactory overall. Good teaching was seen in Year 5 and this contributed to the sound short-term gains made in learning. Staff have worked very hard at developing this subject and with further training and improved resources, standards should rise. However, there are, at present, very limited opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support other curriculum areas, although several effective examples were seen in music, art and design and mathematics in Key Stage 2.
14. Overall, pupils' achievements are satisfactory in Key Stage 2, but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1. This is because the quality of teaching is better in Key Stage 2, and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning. In the Foundation Stage in nursery, pupils make sound gains in learning because of the very good teaching, progress regresses in reception classes and Year 1, but picks up again in Year 2. Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1.

### Synopsis

15. Pupils' results and achievements as judged by inspection findings

St James CE Primary School	Nursery			Reception		
	Attainment on entry	Achievement	Learning	Attainment on entry	Achievement	Learning
Communication, Language and Literacy	Well below	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Well below	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Mathematical Development	Well below	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Well below	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Knowledge and Understanding of the World	Well below	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Well below	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Personal and Social Development	Well below	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Below	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Creative Development	Well below	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Below	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Physical Development	Well below	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Below	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Special Educational Needs	Good progress			Good progress		
Higher-attaining Pupils	Good progress			Unsatisfactory progress		

Subject	Standards		Achievements		Learning	
	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
English	Well below	Below	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Mathematics	Well below	Below	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Science	Below	In line	Unsatisfactory	Good	Unsatisfactory	Good
ICT	Below	Below	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
RE	Below	In line	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Art and Design	In line	Above	Satisfactory	Very good	Satisfactory	Very good
Design Technology	In line	In line	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory	Good
History	Below	In line	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory
Geography	Below	Below	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Music	In line	Above	Satisfactory	Very good	Satisfactory	Very good
Physical Education	N/A	In line	N/A	Satisfactory	N/A	Satisfactory

Key Stage 1	
Special Educational Needs	Unsatisfactory progress
English as an Additional Language	Satisfactory progress
Higher-attaining Pupils	Unsatisfactory progress

Key Stage 2	
Special Educational Needs	Satisfactory progress
English as an Additional Language	Satisfactory progress
Higher-attaining Pupils	Satisfactory progress

### Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Pupils enjoy school and this is confirmed by parents. Good attitudes to school, good behaviour, sound relationships and the satisfactory initiative and personal responsibility which pupils display within the school community make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and to the community of the school. Pupils in the nursery and reception classes demonstrate good attitudes to learning and the structured routines have a positive effect on behaviour.
17. Overall, pupils' responses to teaching are good. Their responses are satisfactory or better in almost all lessons and occasionally very good or excellent. In those classes where the pace of the lesson is good and teachers' expectations are high, pupils are well motivated, interested and responsive. For example, in a Year 6 numeracy lesson in which pupils were working out simple percentages, they were enraptured by the visual images created by the teacher when explaining that 'cent' implies a one hundredth part. In such lessons, which are very well structured to use time effectively and to stimulate all pupils to develop ideas independently and in small groups, pupils are enthusiastic and remain focused on their work, enabling them to make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. Pupils usually work well individually, in pairs and in groups, sharing resources with one another, co-operating and increasingly collaborating well as they move through the school. For example, in a Year 5 lesson in which pupils were learning about the parts of a flower, they carefully removed the sepal and petals and examined them through magnifying lenses, discussing what they could see and seeking explanations as to the function of the sepal and why it dries up. Where the pace and challenge of lessons is less demanding and teaching is unsatisfactory, concentration and focus lapse after short periods and pupils need constant encouragement to continue to apply themselves to their work. Pupils readily volunteer to answer questions but their ability to ask questions, contribute to whole class discussions and to undertake independent research is insufficiently developed.

18. Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is usually good and most pupils are self disciplined, although a minority of pupils behave inappropriately on occasions, failing to respond to instructions, talking whilst the teacher is working with a small group of pupils and calling out. Pupils understand the high standards of behaviour that are expected from them and usually respond well to these. Pupils have a very good understanding of the school's rules and have been involved in considering them within their classes and reflecting upon the impact of their actions on others. Most parents believe that the school's values and attitudes help pupils to become mature and responsible. During the last school year there was one fixed period exclusion. The good standards of behaviour have a positive effect on learning and standards, but in Key Stage 1 there are occasions when pupils do become restless, but staff manage behaviour well, especially in Year 2 and pupils return to task.
19. Pupils move around the school in an orderly fashion, with a minimum of supervision. They are courteous and trustworthy and show respect for the school's and other pupils' property. There is no evidence of vandalism, graffiti or litter in or around the school. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and all adults working in the school are satisfactory and often good. Pupils have respect for each other's feelings, values and beliefs. During breaks, they play well together and enjoy each other's company. Pupils are supportive and considerate of each other and ensure that nobody is excluded. Although pupils and parents express some concerns about bullying and the way in which it is dealt with, pupils are very confident that if they have any worries about bullying or relationship breakdowns, they may take them to teachers or other adults working in the school and they will be resolved.
20. Throughout the school pupils warmly welcome visitors and are confident in showing and discussing their work. Pupils respond well to visiting speakers and assemblies which help them to develop a very good awareness of the needs of others. They identify and support a range of charities such as the work of Barnardo's and they entertain the residents at a local residential home with singing at Christmas time.
21. Throughout the school, pupils undertake tasks within the classroom. They keep their own areas tidy and assist in handing out books and resources. As they progress through the school, they respond well to the increased opportunities to undertake whole school responsibilities such as assisting with assemblies, supervising younger pupils at lunchtime, tidying books in the library area and serving on the school council. Many pupils do not, however, take sufficient responsibility for their own learning and need to be constantly motivated, with only a limited number of pupils undertaking independent research.
22. Overall attendance is unsatisfactory and there are high levels of unauthorised absence. However, 108 pupils achieved very good, or better, levels of attendance in the last school year and 15 pupils achieved an excellent 100% attendance. In 1999/2000, the attendance rate was 92.2 per cent compared a national average of 94.4 per cent. In the same year, unauthorised absence was three times the national average of 0.5 per cent. From the school's own analysis of data, it is clear that the progress of pupils with poor attendance records is adversely affected by their missed schooling. Punctuality throughout the day is good but at the start of the day, a minority of pupils are late for school which is often associated with domestic difficulties.

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

23. Inspection findings judge teaching to be satisfactory overall, however, teaching is very variable and ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory and result in pupils making uneven gains in their learning. All teachers have the potential to deliver at least satisfactory lessons, but they must address the issue of rigorously teaching basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, raise their expectations, improve their quality of marking, set more challenging tasks for higher-attaining pupils and consistently use pupils' individual education plans in their planning of activities. During the week of inspection, two teachers with responsibility for literacy were absent due to illness. The school has at present two newly qualified teachers and Year 1 pupils are taught by a supply teacher and a teacher on a short-term contract. During the week of inspection four percent of teaching seen was excellent, this was seen in Year 2 in science, and in Year 6 in literacy and art and design. These lessons were particularly inspirational and pupils made very good gains in their learning.
24. Fifteen per cent of teaching was very good, this was seen in the nursery in all areas of learning, in Year 6 in literacy, numeracy, music, Year 5 numeracy and physical education, Year 3 science and Year 2 literacy and numeracy. Examples of good teaching were seen in Year 5 information and communication technology, numeracy, science, literacy and geography, Year 4 numeracy, literacy and science, Year 3 art and design, Year 2 numeracy, design and technology and history, Year 3 and Year 6 information and communication technology. In all other lessons, teaching was satisfactory. Unsatisfactory lessons were

seen in Year 5 in science, Year 4 in geography, Year 3 literacy and numeracy, Year 1 literacy and numeracy, and reception classes literacy and numeracy. There are common elements in the unsatisfactory lessons seen, which relate to the unsatisfactory implementation of the literacy and numeracy hour in some classes. In these lessons there is under-challenge of higher-attaining pupils; principles of literacy and numeracy teaching are not appropriately developed, especially in guided reading and writing sessions, and on occasions plenary sessions are not sufficiently well structured.

25. Marking is variable, but is unsatisfactory overall because pupils' mistakes are not used as teaching points and pupils are not shown how to set their work out correctly. Furthermore there is over emphasis on the use of unrealistic praise when pupils' written work is clearly not good enough. Letters are incorrectly formed. These weaknesses in teaching are not addressed from reception classes and Year 1, and this results in teachers in Year 2 having to play 'catch up' in teaching basic skills of correct letter formation, spelling, presentation, layout and number formation. This results in pupils of all ability groups experiencing difficulty in recording what they have learnt. The use of homework is satisfactory overall, but it is given out inconsistently, this is an area which the school has recognised and is addressing.
26. In the weaker examples of teaching, there is a lack of focus on explicit and challenging interventions. Pupils are left for too long without having their understanding checked. There is a lack of modelling of reading and writing strategies such as the use of 'post its' to cover up familiar words, and in word level work there is insufficient emphasis placed upon teaching letter formation with letter recognition. This starts in the reception classes and is not checked in Year 1. The cumulative effect of this is redressed in Year 2, but by then pupils are very far behind in their work and in spite of the teachers, best efforts they find it hard to catch up. In literacy and numeracy in the satisfactory lessons seen there are nevertheless weaknesses. Teachers do not ensure that various fundamental teaching methods as prescribed by the national literacy strategy are applied. For example the progression in phonics is inconsistently implemented in Key Stage 1 and results in pupils experiencing weaknesses in spelling. Teachers do not use the principles of demonstration, scribing, modelling correct letter formation, support composition, rehearsing unfamiliar language in reading, using text to support specific teaching points and linking writing to reading previously undertaken. Plenary sessions, on occasions, are not sufficiently well structured to enable pupils to learn from one another. In numeracy, insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to problem solve and use a range of recording strategies, charts and graphs to support learning in other areas of the curriculum.
27. Learning is very inconsistent in Key Stage 2. In Year 3 it dips, picks up again in Year 4, regresses slightly in Year 5 and in Year 6 very good gains are made in learning, because of the examples of inspirational teaching, especially in literacy. The most effective teaching in Year 6 is characterised by very good working relationships between the two teachers who, in spite of the various limitations that pupils have in accessing the curriculum, challenge pupils to achieve their very best. Both teachers do this by ensuring that pupils feel secure in their learning. They give excellent explanations of the work to be covered, make their expectations very clear to pupils and share the learning objectives with them. This ensures that pupils understand what they should do and supports their progress. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are grouped by prior attainment for literacy and numeracy and this makes planning easier for the teachers. In literacy lower-attaining pupils explore and analyse texts and when the teacher has modelled what is expected of them and is secure in her mind that pupils have understood the learning objective, she gives them a writing task closely linked to that objective. This helps pupils feel secure and consequently very good gains are made in learning. The higher-attaining pupils in Year 6 are developing a love of language because their teacher believes in excellence for all pupils and has very high expectations of them. He has a passion for making creative links between literacy, art and design, music and dance. Pupils respond very well to this because, when learning, they engage their minds and their emotions and make better gains in their intellectual and creative efforts. For example, a great deal of emphasis is placed upon developing pupils' skills of visualisation. Pupils are encouraged to see pictures in their minds when texts are read and they are helped to value their personal responses. The poetry tree display in this class shows pupils' responses to analysing content and structure of the work of William Shakespeare and Walter de la Mare. When studying the 'Snow Queen' pupils are encouraged to further develop their reading skills by analysing Christina Rossetti's poem 'Goblin Market'. The connections that pupils make between different interpretations of writers contribute very positively to the very good short-term gains made in learning. In an excellent art and design lesson, the teacher explained precisely the design process used to create a science fiction head-dress. He skilfully linked pupils' knowledge of the genre of science fiction writing to designing an alien head-dress and used excellent resources such as theatrical head-dresses to make pupils aware of how the end product is achieved. In this lesson, pupils once again made very good gains in learning because they were clear about the intricacies involved in measuring, marking and evaluating their designs.



28. In Years 3 and 4, good and very good teaching was seen in science. Teachers gave very clear explanations of how to set up a 'fair test', providing opportunities for pupils to record in a variety of ways and pupils were enthralled by the idea of finding their own methods of carrying out experiments. When learning about circuits pupils physically formed a circle and held hands to represent a circuit. The teacher then held a ruler in between their hands, which represented an insulator, and this broke the circuit. Pupils made good gains in their learning due to this physical representation of knowledge. This range of good teaching methods used by teachers in Key Stage 2 enables pupils to learn effectively. Another feature of good teaching was seen in a dance lesson in Year 5 when the teacher consistently encouraged a group of reluctant boys to participate in learning by establishing an atmosphere of reflection and evaluation. He persisted in encouraging the boys to perform and eventually they participated well in the lesson and made good gains in learning.
29. In an excellent science lesson in Key Stage 1, the teacher used three different methods to demonstrate to his pupils how to construct simple circuits. His excellent explanations met the needs of all pupils and resulted in all ability groups making good progress.
30. Teachers generally have secure subject knowledge, but they miss opportunities available to teach basic skills. This results in pupils not having sufficient opportunities to develop their skills of literacy and numeracy and this is why standards in English and mathematics remain well below average by the time they are 7. Teachers' planning is satisfactory in both key stages although learning objectives in reception and Year 1 could be more precisely stated in literacy and numeracy. This would help teachers with their ongoing assessments in identifying how well pupils have understood the purpose of the lesson. Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of their pupils, especially at the lower end of Key Stage 1. This manifests itself in higher-attaining pupils not being sufficiently challenged because they are not presented with appropriately challenging tasks early enough in the school year. For example elements of literacy and numeracy are not introduced until later on in the year when many pupils are ready to begin this work now. Teachers' expectations of what children can achieve, especially in the early stages of learning, are too low and this restricts pupils' rates of progress.
31. A strength of teaching in the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is the way in which teachers manage their pupils' behaviour. This is consistently good and the behaviour management strategies employed in lessons contribute to the overall sound gains made in learning. Support staff are not always effectively used and there are times when they assist in lessons which do not always require their presence, for example in whole-class physical education lessons. In reception classes and Year 1, support staff are not always given sufficient direction by the teachers to help them develop pupils' basic skills. Whilst teachers plan with supportive staff, there is no system in place to check the effectiveness of the support staff's delivery. This is especially the case in the teaching of basic skills. This results in pupils making better gains in learning in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. Overall, pupils maintain good concentration, but further opportunities could be provided for pupils to become independent learners. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have better knowledge of their learning because they are more familiar with knowing how to improve the quality of their work due to the very good marking seen in Year 6.
32. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, but there are weaknesses in the reception classes. In the nursery teaching is very good because the teacher knows how young children learn and provides stimulating activities for them. Assessment procedures are good and are well used to plan pupils' work. There are weaknesses in reception and in Year 1 in the use of assessment to inform planning because higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged with tasks that are matched to their needs. A significant feature of good teaching is the regular evaluation by teachers of all lessons in identifying what works and what does not work, and the effect that this has on pupils' learning.
33. The teaching of pupils with a special educational need is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 1 and, overall, satisfactory in Key Stage 2. When pupils receive specialist help from support staff and the special needs co-ordinator they often make sound progress because the work is more suitably matched to their needs. Support staff take note of the targets in pupil's individual education plans during literacy lessons but this does not consistently happen in other subjects of the curriculum. Insufficient emphasis is placed on developing the pupil's reading and writing skills in the early years of Key Stage 1 and so teachers and pupils struggle to make up this lost ground in Year 2 and Key Stage 2. When, in the later years of Key Stage 2, pupils benefit from at least good and sometimes outstanding teaching their progress improves and they demonstrate that they can respond to the higher expectations and greater challenge presented by their teachers. This is evident from both lessons seen and from a scrutiny of pupil's work.

34. Due to the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools it is difficult to compare the quality of the present teaching with that of the previous inspections. However, the action plan drawn up by the headteacher and governing body identifying key generic issues such as using a wider range of teaching styles, clear learning objectives, using assessment to inform planning and increasing pace and challenge is clearly evident. However, whilst expectations of what pupils can do at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved; further rigour is required in raising expectations in reception classes, Year 1, Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5. Planning has improved and overall progress has been satisfactory.

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

35. The curriculum is broad and provides good learning opportunities for its pupils, but it is slightly unbalanced because time allocation to subjects such as science in Key Stage 1 is too low. At present, the extra time allocated to reading, handwriting and spelling is not appropriately structured as skills are taught in isolation from texts studied, and do not support pupils' learning of what has been taught in the literacy hour. For example, in the extra time allocated to reading, the principles of modelling, intervening, guiding pupils to use what they have learnt in reading into writing is not consistently developed by teachers. Progression in phonics is not systematically taught and insufficient attention has been given to providing learning opportunities for pupils to practise what they have learnt in additional literacy in other subjects of the curriculum. Because skills are sometimes taught out of context with other parts of the curriculum, pupils do not always make maximum gains in their learning. There is a significant lack of learning opportunities in reception and Year 1 to develop pupils' basic skills in reading, writing and number through all subjects. Subject co-ordinators have not yet fully identified learning opportunities in their subjects to ensure that these basic skills are adequately covered.
36. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. However, the range of learning opportunities in Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory because insufficient opportunities are provided for the teaching of basic skills. Teachers in the foundation stage of learning have worked very hard to provide a balanced curriculum which includes all areas of learning. The good system that has been set up to ensure that all pupils participate daily in activities relating to communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, physical development, personal, social and emotional development ensures that all pupils have equality of access. However, teachers in reception classes now need to review the system of 'free flow' activities because too much time is spent by children aimlessly playing without appropriate adult intervention in developing through play their basic skills of literacy and numeracy. This results in pupils not being adequately prepared for Key Stage 1 to cope with the demands of the National Curriculum. Also learning opportunities planned for above average attainers are not sufficiently challenging, because, at present planning has been dominated by national recommendations rather than being led by pupils' needs. For example, higher-attaining pupils would benefit from the full range of activities contained in the literacy and the numeracy hour, but this is only introduced in the summer term.
37. Learning opportunities in the nursery are good and overall the curriculum provided in the Foundation Stage of learning is vibrant and exciting. Detailed assessments are kept of pupils, but in the reception classes full use is not made of these assessments to set challenging work for above average attaining pupils.
38. The school generally meets statutory requirements with the exception of control and modelling in information and communication technology. This has been recognised by the information and communication technology co-ordinator and is being addressed. The curriculum actively respects cultural and religious diversity and sound opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about world religions, customs and traditions and artists from other countries.
39. The provision of extra-curricular activities for pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, is very good and all pupils have the opportunity to take part in a range of visits, which support and enhance the curriculum. Additionally, visitors come into the school to share their experiences, interests and talents with the pupils. The inspection team could not support the views of a very significant minority of parents who do not believe that the school provides an interesting range of extra activities. A wide range of extra activities including study support and a homework club, boys' and girls' football, dance, guitar club, art club, tag rugby, cycling proficiency and recorder group are open to pupils. The popularity of these activities, many of which are supported by funding from the New Opportunities Fund, is evidenced by the very high take-up of places, with almost 200 pupils participating in one or more activities. The school seeks to ensure that pupils have an opportunity to take part in an activity of their choice. Classes visit local places such

as Sandwell Valley, the Black Country Museum, Oak House, Gloucester Canal Museum and a local Mosque. All pupils from Year 2 have the opportunity to participate in a residential visit, which enriches the curriculum and makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal and social development. Puppeteers, the Countryside Centre, the 'animal man' and representatives of the Church and community groups support pupils' creative, social and cultural development further through visits to the school.

40. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is satisfactory overall. Pupils are taught about management of emotions, the effects of exercise and healthy eating on their bodies and the harmful effect of drugs. The school has good links with the community and with partner schools. Links with the neighbouring playgroup are good and those with the secondary school, to which the majority of pupils transfer at the age of 11, provide good opportunities for older pupils to extend their work in areas of the curriculum such as information and communication technology, design technology and science. One particularly good link is that which has brought together local engineering business, St James's and the local secondary school in a project which has extended pupils' understanding of engineering in a practical way. Links with the community benefit the learning opportunities available to pupils and provide good opportunities for pupils' personal and social development. Pupils undertake visits and visiting speakers, representing the local community, come into school and talk to the pupils. For example, local puppeteers support work in the curriculum, the community police officer provides good support to the school and to pupils and the local Church, through the vicar. The parish youth worker, provides particularly valuable support by taking regular assemblies and supporting pupils in classrooms on two days each week.
41. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. All aspects of school life make a contribution towards pupils' spiritual growth but there are few opportunities for pupils to experience 'wonder' through their subjects, although, on occasions, pupils experience awe, for example when Year 6 pupils interpreted William Blake's poem, 'The Sick Rose' to find its real meaning. Opportunities are provided in assemblies for quiet reflection, through the focus of a candle. Pupils are provided with insights into values and beliefs through religious education and stories in collective worship.
42. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Teachers constantly reaffirm the principles of morality and ensure that pupils understand the meaning of right and wrong. Pupils treat each other and adults with respect and teachers make good use of praise in order to instil in pupils the importance of valuing others as well as themselves. Pupils work well together, setting out equipment for their activities and sharing resources and ideas. From an early age they are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and behaviour and also to undertake responsibilities such as taking the register to the office and tidying up after activities. Opportunities increase as they move through the school with members of the school council developing a real sense of playing a role in the school and in its community.
43. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their cultural awareness. They are taught about major world faiths and the similarities and differences between religions and cultures. Pupils learn about their own culture through visits to places of interest, visitors to school and through subjects such as music, history, geography and science. They learn to appreciate the richness and diversity of their multicultural world through displays such as those of Asian textiles and African masks, the time-line which extends throughout the school and subjects such as music, religious education, and assemblies. Visits to places of worship such as the local Church and a Mosque further enhance their understanding.
44. The school ensures that pupils with a special educational need are included in all aspects of school life but the lack of progress made in literacy and numeracy in Key Stage 1 makes it difficult for some to fully access the curriculum. There is a strong commitment from both the staff and governing body to provide a caring and supporting environment where pupils feel safe. In this they are successful. There is now a need to develop that commitment to include raising the standards that pupils attain in all areas of the curriculum. The teachers in the later years of Key Stage 2 are demonstrating that this can be done. There is also a need to continue to develop the use of information and communication technology for the benefit of pupils with a special need.
45. Co-ordinators should ensure that when developing policies and schemes of work, they consult with the special needs co-ordinator and include support and advice for teachers on how best to cater for the needs of these pupils. On occasions pupils are withdrawn from class for individual or group support but the majority of support is within class. Care should be taken that pupils are not always withdrawn from the same lessons.

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

46. The school cares well for its pupils, but more stringent provision needs to be made for raising standards in Key Stage 1, especially for those who have special educational needs, and those who are higher attainers by improving opportunities for teaching basic skills across the curriculum and using assessment data to inform planning.
47. The school's ethos and the high expectations of teachers and adults working within the school are successful in promoting pupils' good standards of behaviour in and around the school and during lessons. The school has an effective behaviour management policy, which is consistently applied by staff and well understood by pupils, who value the praise and recognition of staff. Pupils accept that sanctions, such as having 'time out', being given a detention or being sent to the headteacher, are applied fairly. Pupils speak highly of the support which they receive from all staff and are confident that they can take concerns, including those about friendship breakdowns, to any member of staff and that they will be listened to and the issues will be addressed sympathetically and resolved effectively, both by staff and midday supervisors, involving parents fully when necessary. The school's anti-bullying policy is satisfactory and pupils are aware of what they need to do should this occur. A number of pupils and parents, however, do identify bullying as a problem. Procedures for dealing with this are not always applied consistently and issues are not always addressed as quickly as pupils and parents would like, although isolated incidents of oppressive behaviour and racism are dealt with very promptly and resolved. Although there are some inconsistencies in recording incidents of poor behaviour and bullying, the effectiveness of the strategies employed to manage behaviour and good monitoring and support for pupils' personal development, ensure good overall standards of behaviour and good personal relationships, which, together, help to create a learning environment that has a positive effect on both attainment and progress.
48. The school has satisfactory procedures to monitor attendance and punctuality and seeks to discourage parents to take holidays outside term time. The school does not contact parents on the first day of absence in those cases where no explanation has been provided. The school does not promote good attendance by celebrating the achievement of those pupils or classes, which have very good or excellent levels of attendance. Registers are marked accurately and the school is rigorous in authorising absences. In those cases where concerns are identified, the school seeks to resolve them in partnership with parents and outside agencies. Satisfactory support is available from the education welfare officer who is readily accessible.
49. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and comply with requirements. The school is vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities and there are good liaison arrangements with outside agencies. The school uses the local area protection committee's guidelines. The headteacher is responsible for child protection and has undertaken appropriate training. He is supported in this role by the deputy headteacher which ensures that there is always someone available to respond to any concerns. All staff are familiar with the procedures to be followed in the case of any concerns and these procedures are reinforced during induction for new staff and through staff meetings. The school has identified that it does not have a policy for the use of restraint to protect pupils from harming themselves or others and is in the process of preparing a draft policy for consideration by the governing body.
50. The overall management of health and safety is good. Teachers have a good awareness of safety and pupils are taught safe practices in lessons. The school has a good policy supported by that of the local education authority. The headteacher, who has recently undertaken training in the management of health and safety, is responsible for its implementation. The school is developing a comprehensive portfolio of risk assessments and regular safety audits are conducted and recorded. Fire extinguishers, portable electrical appliances and equipment such as that used for physical education are regularly tested. Emergency evacuations are practised each term and identified issues are addressed.
51. The arrangements for providing first aid are satisfactory. Three staff hold current first aid certificates and pupils are looked after well. There is a medical room in which pupils who are unwell, or who have sustained minor injuries, can be looked after. First aid supplies meet requirements and are readily accessible throughout the school and first aid kits are taken on school visits. Accident records are satisfactory but there is insufficient detail and formal monitoring of the records to ensure that potential risks are identified. Parents are appropriately advised of accidents and contacted in the event of any concerns about a pupil's health.

52. Outside agencies and education specialists provide good support and advice for pupils, especially the behavioural support unit and the unit for hearing impaired pupils.
53. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good and include a wide range of statutory and optional assessment tests. In mathematics, English and science there is regular and periodic testing. These subjects are beginning to build up a profile of pupil achievements based on key objectives for each year group. The school has made good progress in identifying literacy targets and in setting ability groups by prior achievement. Better teaching has effective in-lesson assessments that inform the next stage in the pupils' learning. In science schemes of work have key yearly objectives that show progression in skills, knowledge and understanding. This is a major reason for the good progress made at Key Stage 2.
54. The school is satisfactorily monitoring the academic performances of pupils but still has some way to go to make these practices consistent throughout the school. As a result of nationally based assessments, target groups of pupils are established for additional help with their learning. The higher-attaining science pupils are identified in Year 6 and as a result receive additional specialist teaching at the local secondary school. Pupil portfolios of work are a satisfactory start to needs-assessment. However, teachers' marking is very inconsistent and does not always inform pupils of what they need to do in order to improve. Teachers inconsistently use National Curriculum levels in their planning thus reducing the effectiveness of future target setting and levels of challenge. Since the amalgamation monitoring has been effective in establishing areas of development for the whole school and for individual teachers' training needs. Teachers' use of information gained from assessment data to improve standards is broadly satisfactory, but it is not consistently applied. It is more effective in Key Stage 2 than it is in Key Stage 1.
55. The school has a positive approach to furthering the development of pupils with a special educational need. Local Authority support staff compliment the school on its identification of and care for pupils with hearing and visual impairments, for example, and appreciate its work. Good links are made with support agencies and specialist services provided by the local authority. The special education needs Code of Practice is well implemented. There is a high number of pupils at Stage 1 and it is questionable whether some of them need to be on the register at all. In the literacy lessons seen provision generally matched that recommended by the pupil's statement of special educational needs and individual education plans. However, this is not always the case in other lessons. These plans are reviewed three times a year and contain suitable targets, are clearly presented and of good quality.

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

56. Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents generally express positive views of the school which has satisfactory strategies to involve them in its work and in supporting their children's learning. However, a significant minority of parents express concerns about the information which they receive from the school, particularly about their child's progress, and a minority do not believe that the school works sufficiently closely with parents. The partnership between school and home is reinforced by a pupil/home/school agreement which was returned by almost three quarters of all parents last year. Although many parents provide very good support for their children, a very significant minority is not actively involved in their children's learning at home and at school.
57. Overall parents' support for pupils' learning is unsatisfactory and many parents do not share books with their children or listen to them read on a regular basis, which means that their children do not receive the encouragement and support which could benefit their learning.
58. The school held a parents' evening to explain the school/home contract and used that opportunity to provide some information about the National Numeracy Strategy. However, the school has not arranged any other opportunities for parents to learn about the curriculum and does not provide a regular overview of the curriculum which could help parents to support their children's learning at home. Newsletters provide satisfactory information about the life and work of the school
59. Three consultation meetings for parents are held each year, providing them with the opportunity to meet teachers and discuss their children's progress. Parents respond to these opportunities very well with over 90 per cent attending on these evenings. The school seeks to contact those parents who are unable, or fail, to attend and to offer alternative opportunities to meet with staff. Particularly in the Foundation Stage, staff are readily accessible to parents to discuss their children and the school seeks to involve parents in the case of any concern. Parents receive a detailed annual progress report which

includes information of their child's National Curriculum levels, knowledge and understanding and a comment about attitude and application to tasks, as well as a comment by the pupil on what has been done particularly well and what should be improved in the next year. These targets help parents to understand how they can support their child. Comments in the written reports show that teachers know pupils well as individuals.

60. A small but hardworking group of parents and staff organise the Friends of St James which runs activities and events involving the pupils, such as a Christmas Fayre and family quiz evenings. The funds raised are used to provide additional resources such as books for the library and audio equipment and to pay for special activities such as discos and parties for the children. About 12 parents and other adults help regularly in the school and parents also help by supervising pupils on visits to places such as Blackheath where, during the week of the inspection, Year 5 pupils travelled by public transport and carried out surveys of shops, traffic and parking to support work in geography. The support of parents is appreciated by pupils and staff. Parents are very appreciative of the 'open door' policy adopted by the headteacher. They are welcomed into the school and find all the staff approachable.
61. The school provides good opportunities for parents of pupils with special educational needs to maintain links with the school and to follow their children's attainment and progress. Unfortunately parents do not always take advantage of the opportunities provided, for example to attend review meetings, but they are kept informed of developments by post. Those parents who do show an interest and who help and encourage their children at home make a valuable contribution to the progress that their children make. There are opportunities during the year for parents to attend meetings with teachers to discuss their children's progress with teachers.

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

62. The headteacher has only been in post for eighteen months and in this short time he has identified the most urgent priorities, notably to raise standards in all subjects, improve the quality of teaching and learning, especially in Key Stage 1 and unite the staff from the two schools in implementing his vision for the school. The headteacher is very keen to develop an ethos based upon Christian values where both staff and pupils are supported in all that they do but at the same time they develop a sense of ownership and personal responsibility. This is best manifested by the implementation of certain behaviour management strategies which demand a whole school approach to reasoning with pupils in an attempt to help them recognise the effects of their actions on others. As this takes time some members of staff become frustrated because the results of this approach are not always immediately evident, however, pupils interviewed have unanimously agreed that they are treated very fairly and that they appreciate the opportunities provided to present their points of view.
63. The headteacher provides good purposeful leadership, and is appropriately supported by his key staff. However, at present, the senior management team does not have the full range of expertise to raise standards quickly because not all members are fully aware of the best approaches of planning and implementing rigorous strategies for raising standards in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Furthermore the senior management's skills of monitoring planning need to be improved. Whilst planning is monitored regularly it is not rigorous enough in identifying that expectation in reception classes and Year 1 have been too low. The input of these co-ordinators would help develop more effective dialogue amongst senior management in identifying best practice in the school and subsequently further improve the quality of teaching and learning. The school's aims and Christian values are well reflected in all of its work especially in the teaching of music, physical education, science, art and design and design and technology.
64. The senior management team would benefit from involving the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators in strategic planning, so that they can further develop curriculum planning in helping identify opportunities for literacy and numeracy to be taught in other subjects. The headteacher is well supported by the governing body whose members are regular visitors to the school and know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They fulfil their statutory duties well and ensure that the school is inclusive in all of its practices. The governors are very committed to raising standards and are in dialogue with subject leaders in receiving regular updates on developments in their subjects, so that they can account for the performance of the school. However, governors need to monitor the effectiveness of the school's communication systems among the staff to ensure that everyone is interpreting the headteacher's directives appropriately.

65. The headteacher and governors monitor and evaluate the school's performance effectively diagnosing its strengths and weaknesses and taking appropriate action to secure improvements. This is seen in the prudent decision made relating to the most appropriate placement of staff so that the strongest practice is strategically used at the end of the key stages. However further consideration needs to be given to developing the roles of year group leaders so that there is a clearer overview of the effectiveness of strategic deployment of support staff and the identification of strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment, and teachers' effectiveness in moving pupils on in their learning.
66. The school is clear about its priorities and uses data effectively to set targets for improvement. The school development plan sets out how the school intends to address its identified priorities, but the plan has weaknesses as a management tool. Although the priorities are appropriate to the school's stage of development, it lacks clear timescales, success criteria and information as to how the priorities are to be monitored and evaluated.
67. The management of the school's finances is good, although planning and financial control have been frustrated, since the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools, by late and inaccurate information from the local education authority (LEA). The LEA has accepted, in correspondence, that advice provided by the LEA's Schools Financial Services Section was 'incorrect' and that as a consequence the school 'spent money on resources which you would not otherwise (have) spent at that time'. In spite of these constraints the governing body has worked very hard at creating a realistic budget and the large overspend is accurately accounted for and approved by the LEA. The school development plan is closely linked to the financial planning in the school. The governing body monitors expenditure carefully and the chair and governors are conscious of their responsibilities and the difficulties which they face in fulfilling them if information is not timely and accurate. Financial controls and procedures are good but, the systems have not been checked through by an audit since the schools amalgamated.
68. The school uses its resources to good effect to support pupils' learning and additional funding obtained through the New Opportunities Fund, has been used well to raise standards through initiatives such as the introduction of clubs and activities, including a homework club and the development of a mother and toddler group which provides an effective link with the Foundation Stage.
69. The school has good procedures to ensure that it applies the principles of best value through use of data to compare itself with other local schools and fair competitive tendering, although it has yet to develop procedures to consult with all stakeholders, including parents.
70. The match of teachers and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum is good. Teaching staff are appropriately qualified to teach nursery, infant and junior age pupils and, although first qualifications do not always match co-ordinator responsibilities, there is a broad range of expertise amongst the staff. Administrative support is sufficient to meet the school's needs and these staff make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school. The school has effective performance management systems in place and governors have undertaken their training and are fully aware of their responsibilities.
71. Induction arrangements for new staff and newly qualified teachers are good, and newly qualified teachers are well supported by the deputy headteacher, but further opportunities need to be provided for them to observe the examples of excellent teaching in the school.
72. The accommodation is good overall and in classrooms teachers make the best possible use of the space. The organisation of furniture provides opportunities for pupils to engage in group activities. This has a positive effect on pupils developing their skills of independence and enquiry. The classrooms and open spaces around the school are in good decorative order. The furniture is in good condition and looked after well. Arrangements at lunch times and break times are good. Pupils are able to sit with their friends at lunchtimes and this provides opportunities for personal and social development. Resources are satisfactory overall and this helps with and this helps to raise pupil attainment, because pupils are interested in what they do. However, further multi-cultural resources need to be purchased for the Foundation Stage. There is a library area and a computer room and these provide opportunities for pupils to develop their research skills and private study. There is a very good display around the school of historical artefacts, in geography and general studies there are maps and photographs illustrating current world topics. In the art and technology room there are very good displays of textiles, paintings, drawings and artefacts that pupils have made. Posters and the display of work provide stimulus and interest. Materials for three-dimensional work and art are good. Resources for the curriculum are satisfactory.

73. Teachers are appropriately deployed to take responsibility for specific areas of the curriculum. They have the necessary skills and expertise to co-ordinate and develop key areas of the curriculum, but more effective use could be made of support staff.
74. The management of special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Good administrative systems for special educational needs have been set up and are efficiently carried out. The co-ordinator is experienced and carries out these duties well. Together with class teachers and support staff she ensures that individual education plans contain suitable targets and are reviewed appropriately. There is now a need for her to ensure that she is involved in the development of schemes of work for all curriculum areas so that they reflect the needs of the pupils and contain suitable support and advice for staff relating to resources and teaching strategies. However, she does not have the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning so that good practice, including high expectations and appropriate challenge, is spread from the later years of Key Stage 2 throughout the school. Neither does she liaise with the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators to raise the standards attained by the pupils in Key Stage 1 and the early years of Key Stage 2. Support staff, including additional literacy support staff, are not always efficiently and effectively used, nor is their work monitored. The special needs co-ordinator is a good practitioner but does not have the opportunity to pass on these talents, through in-service training to other members of staff. The governing body has appointed a governor with responsibility for this area of school life. They are rightly concerned to ensure the pastoral and academic care of special educational needs pupils, but they do not monitor the standards that these pupils attain and the progress they are making as they move through the school.

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

**For the purpose of clarity, reference has been made to Part B of the report.**

- (a) Raise standards in English, mathematics, science, religious education, information and communication technology, and the majority of foundation subjects in Key Stage 1, and in Key Stage 2 further raise standards in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and geography by:
- ensuring that basic skills of reading, writing, number and information and communication technology are effectively taught and opportunities for developing these skills are rigorously identified in teachers' planning;
  - ensuring that pupils have further opportunities to problem solve in mathematics and use a range of recording strategies (charts, graphs) to support their learning in other areas of the curriculum;
  - ensuring that teachers in Key Stage 1 provide more opportunities for pupils to record their work;
  - ensuring that the curriculum in the reception classes and Year 1 focuses more on developing pupils' skills in reading, writing and number in structured play activities;
  - ensuring that the period of 'free flow' in reception classes, when pupils choose their own activities, has clear learning opportunities identified and that pupils are engaged in activities which both consolidate and extend their learning and that adults intervene appropriately in these activities in order to move pupils on in their learning;
  - ensuring that support staff are effectively deployed, based upon the needs of the pupils rather than timetable requirements and that the effectiveness of their work is monitored;
  - ensuring that pupils are provided with more opportunities to become independent learners;
  - ensuring that more time is allocated to science in Key Stage 1.
- Paragraphs 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 23, 30, 31, 46
- (b) Review curriculum time allocation for teaching silent reading, handwriting and spelling and provide opportunities in other subjects for these skills to be developed by:
- ensuring that all teachers rigorously follow the progression in phonics as identified in the literacy strategy to further develop pupils' reading writing and spelling skills;
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to become independent learners.
- Paragraphs 7, 21, 30, 35, 44
- (c) Raise teachers' expectations of what higher-attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs can do and ensure that individual education plans are effectively used in planning.
- Paragraphs 7, 23, 24, 30, 33, 37, 44, 46



- (d) Improve the unsatisfactory teaching to satisfactory and the satisfactory teaching to good by:
- ensuring that all teachers have access to the excellent examples of practice within the school and modify their own teaching accordingly;
  - improving the quality of marking by looking at the effective examples in Year 6;
  - raising teachers' expectations, especially in the reception classes and Year 1, as to what pupils can do;
  - improving plenary sessions, so that all pupils learn from one another;
  - ensuring that homework is consistently given and is challenging in its content.
- Paragraphs 25, 26
- (e) Improve the expertise of the senior management team by:
- ensuring that the literacy, numeracy and information and communication co-ordinators contribute to all senior management team' decisions on raising standards;
  - ensuring that the senior management team improve their skills of monitoring teachers' planning, and help teachers identify opportunities for developing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across the curriculum;
  - ensuring that all co-ordinators are familiar with the most effective developments in their subjects and share this expertise with the senior management team in order to further raise standards.
- Paragraphs 63, 65, 66, 71, 74
- (f) Ensure that all staff are united in implementing the headteacher's vision for the school and that senior management ensures that the headteacher's directives are effectively carried out.
- Paragraph 62
- (g) Continue to improve attendance rates.
- Paragraph 22

#### **Minor issues**

- ◆ Improve the school development plan in order to identify clear time scales, success criteria and opportunities for monitoring and evaluating cost effectiveness of priorities identified.
- ◆ Improve resources for pupils with special educational needs.
- ◆ Improve the number of computers in the classroom.
- ◆ Seek ways to further involve parents in their children's learning.
- ◆ Formalise systems for improving communications between staff.

**PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS**

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

Number of lessons observed

85

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

27

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	15	28	41	12	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)	25	412
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	111

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	22
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	147

**English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

**Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

**Attendance**

**Authorised absence**

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	5.2

**Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	1.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	24	35	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	18	21
	Girls	25	28	28
	Total	41	46	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (n/a)	78 (n/a)	83 (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	21	20
	Girls	27	30	31
	Total	45	51	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	76 (n/a)	86 (n/a)	86 (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	28	32	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	18	25
	Girls	19	17	25
	Total	32	35	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (n/a)	58 (n/a)	83 (n/a)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	15	15
	Girls	19	16	22
	Total	31	31	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	52 (n/a)	52 (n/a)	62 (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	17
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	6
Indian	8
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	312
Any other minority ethnic group	6

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

**Teachers and classes****Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y1**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.8
Average class size	29.4

**Education support staff: YR – Y1**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	250

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.3
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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	1	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

**Financial information**

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	855679
Total expenditure	875657
Expenditure per pupil	1937
Balance brought forward from previous year	27202
Balance carried forward to next year	7224

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

437

Number of questionnaires returned

142

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	31	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	52	35	9	3	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	42	6	2	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	38	18	4	6
The teaching is good.	54	37	5	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	35	17	3	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	36	6	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	29	6	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	41	40	13	3	3
The school is well led and managed.	49	39	4	2	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	41	5	2	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	34	25	8	12

## **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**

75. Children who are in the foundation stage of learning are taught in the nursery and in two reception classes. Attainment on entry is very low. This is confirmed by baseline assessments. Children have underdeveloped speech and language skills, their mathematical skills are slightly better but are still well below those expected of children of this age.
76. Children's personal, social and emotional skills are well below expectations of children of this age and it takes many of them a long time to settle into the well-structured routines of the foundation stage curriculum. During the week of inspection, there were 49 part time children in the nursery and 30 children in each of the reception classes. In all areas of learning children make satisfactory progress in the nursery. In the reception classes progress is variable; it is satisfactory in personal, social, emotional development, creative development and physical development, but unsatisfactory in communication, language and literacy, mathematics development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Only the higher-attaining children are likely to attain the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the time that they enter Key Stage 1. Both in nursery and in the two reception classes children with special educational needs make good progress and are well supported by very hard working and caring staff, however, above average attaining pupils are under-challenged in the reception class and their achievements are unsatisfactory overall.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

77. Both in the nursery and in the reception classes, teachers and support staff give a high priority to the development of children's personal, social and emotional development. Children have settled well into school and are familiar with class routines. This is because staff are consistently teaching children what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. They are patient but insistent and this enables all children to make at least satisfactory progress. Children with special educational needs are very well supported by staff and are beginning to settle well and make good progress. At the beginning of the day children happily settle into their classes and most are unaffected when their parents or carers leave. Staff create a happy welcoming atmosphere which helps children to feel secure and builds their confidence. The children respond very well to staff who are good role models. This helps to develop their personal and social skills. Children play and work well together. They are good at sharing toys and taking turns when playing games. They show consideration to one another and are helped to apologise effectively if they upset one another by their actions. Children enjoy their activities. They are enthusiastic when listening to stories and are keen to contribute their ideas. The staff also promote children's personal, social and emotional development well by ensuring that equipment and resources that the children use are readily accessible to them, which helps them to become independent. Children are made to feel valued and to learn right from wrong in a positive way, which enhances their self-esteem. Children are very accepting and supportive of their peers who have special educational needs, following the positive role models from teachers and support staff.
78. A significant feature of the staff's teaching of personal and social developments is that they are very aware of pupils' emotional needs and are very supportive of them. All staff use praise very effectively and do not give up in spite of many frustrating circumstances. All pupils receive good care and this provides them with a good start to their education and helps them develop positive attitudes to learning.

### **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

79. Children enjoy listening to stories and readily share books together or with staff. They enjoy exploring and experimenting with sounds, words and texts but do not ask questions readily. Higher-attaining children talk about the pictures illustrating the stories. They understand that print conveys meaning and use pictures to tell stories. Several higher-attaining children are starting to recognise familiar letters and words. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory, though in the reception class further input needs to be placed in developing children's reading and writing skills through more formal work because higher-attaining children are at present insufficiently challenged.
80. Teachers and support staff provide a good range of activities to develop children's language and communication skills. They use resources well, which engage children's interest and helps their

achievement. In all adult led activities questions are used well to help children develop their vocabulary and very good explanations are given. For example the teacher in the nursery goes to great lengths to develop pupils' vocabulary. When making snake mobiles she used a variety of strategies to help the children learn the word 'coil' ranging from putting a curled up soft toy on the floor, to using her hands to illustrate the concept of 'coil'. This varied approach underpins the teaching style demonstrated in the foundation stage where teachers encourage children's learning by engaging all of their senses

81. Children listen well to their teachers and to each other. They are developing good knowledge of sounds and learning the meaning of new words. Elements of the Literacy Framework are used in the reception class but these could be extended further, especially for the above average attaining children. Children are encouraged to think of themselves as readers and writers whatever their stage of development. However there are few opportunities for children to explore writing in a variety of ways, especially in their sessions for independent play. More could be done to vary the focus of imaginative play areas to include a wider variety of purposes for writing. The majority of children are unlikely to meet the early learning goals for language, literacy and communication by the end of the reception year.
82. Teaching is satisfactory overall but there are weaknesses in the teaching of basic skills of reading and writing in the reception classes. Teaching in the nursery is very good, children are given plenty of opportunities to develop both their vocabulary and early reading and writing skills by the consistent use of well structured learning opportunities which engage all of their senses.
83. Teachers have worked very hard to provide a balanced curriculum which includes all areas of learning. A lot of creative input has gone into the practical organisation of ensuring that all children get good opportunities to learn. However, now that staff are more familiar with the requirements of the foundation stage of learning, they need to consider how best to provide for the needs of higher-attaining pupils to develop recording skills for literacy and numeracy. Further rigour is required in the reception classes to teach all pupils correct letter and number formation, progression in phonics and simple sentence construction. Teachers now need to raise their expectations of pupils in developing opportunities for rigorous and systematic planning of developing basic skills linked to learning through play.

#### **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

84. This area of learning is well taught through the use of many practical activities and by the end of the reception year most higher-attaining children will have reached the early learning goals for mathematics. Most above average children can count reliably to ten and many can count beyond this. They correctly match numerals to groups of objects and some can add and subtract single digit numbers correctly. In the reception class children are able to order numbers and can decide who should be first, second or third when taking turns in their game. Average attaining children were able to sequence pictures in order when retelling the story and know daily activities that take part in the morning and the afternoon. Teachers provide a range of games and puzzles to support children in sorting, ordering, matching and counting. Children are beginning to use mathematical language but they are not confident in number formation and many of them have poor retention skills. When teachers give good explanations and later check children's understanding, children are unable to answer many of the questions. Children enjoy a range of number songs and rhymes. Children also enjoy using the computer to develop their number skills. Whilst the range of activities is well designed to promote children's number skills, more opportunities could be provided to promote correct number formation and basic computation skills especially for the higher-attaining pupils.
85. The teaching observed is consistently very good in nursery and satisfactory in the reception classes. Teachers and support assistants make good use of questions and give very precise explanations. Sessions are generally well planned and well resourced. However, opportunities for recording basic skills of number formation are limited in the reception classes and higher-attaining pupils are under-challenged. Average and below average attaining pupils do not attain the early learning goal in mathematical development due to their very low starting points on entry.

#### **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

86. The majority of children enter the school with very low attainment in general knowledge. Teachers develop their knowledge by helping them understand more about where they live and what has happened to them since they were babies. Several children can talk about photographs of themselves as babies and toddlers, and eagerly describe their younger siblings but their vocabulary lacks basic adjectives and they confuse their tenses when speaking. Some children just give single word answers.

Several children enjoy using the computer and some of them are competent in using the mouse to move objects on the screen but the computer screens are placed too high for these young children and they have to stretch in order to see the screen. Children in the reception class are able to talk about the differences between their houses and the ones built out of straw by the three little pigs. For a good part of each day the reception class timetable promotes self initiated activities. At these times various activities are provided for the children and they play freely. Teachers' planning for these sessions is not sufficiently linked to specific learning objectives linked to adult intervention so that, for example, when pupils are playing in 'Bob the Builder's' yard, their play is not sufficiently enriched by opportunities for vocabulary development. On several occasions the quality of children's play did not provide sufficient opportunities for learning.

87. Teaching in this area is satisfactory in reception classes and very good in nursery, but teachers are still developing the foundation stage curriculum to take account of the new requirements for children of this age and are aware of the need to provide a wider range of challenging activities for higher-attaining pupils. Children's attainment is well below levels expected for their age. Although children are keen to explore their surroundings they have difficulty in explaining similarities and differences, and have difficulty in describing key features of their local environment, especially when describing their likes and dislikes.

### **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

88. Children's physical skills are under-developed and many children are not meeting the early learning goal for this aspect. In physical education lessons, children run, jump and balance with appropriate control. Their movements are well co-ordinated and they are confident in performing short sequences of movements. Children use the hall space well as they move around and they show awareness of other children. They enjoy stamping to a tambourine and work with effort. They explore different ways of travelling along the floor and jumping on to the mats. They respond well to music and can keep in time to the beat of a tambourine.
89. However in their formal activities, children have poor pencil control skills. Many cannot use scissors and glue sticks confidently to cut and join materials. Teaching is good in this area of learning. Teachers are aware of the need to give pupils plenty of opportunities to develop their fine motor skills. Good examples of teaching were seen in both the nursery and the reception classes. In one lesson in reception the teacher made very good use of flash cards to illustrate words used such as crumbling, pulling, curling tightly, trotting gently. These high expectations encouraged pupils to make good gains in their learning. Pupils have good opportunities to develop their physical skills in regular outside play. Teachers and support staff provide regular well structured activities for outside play and this contributes to the overall sound gains that all pupils make in their learning.

### **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

90. Children make sound gains in their learning but many will not attain the early learning goals for this area of learning by the end of the reception year. They enter the school with very low skills. They use paint confidently but many experience difficulty in using brushes. They love mixing paint to make different colours and many squeal with delight when they see paint dribbling off their paintings. In music, teachers provide appropriate and stimulating activities, which help to develop children's singing, listening and rhythmic skills. Children greatly enjoy and benefit from this activity. They enjoy listening to music and singing rhymes and action songs. There are few opportunities, however, for children to explore percussion instruments at other times and to develop their musical ideas. Pupils enjoy drama and role play but the scope for imaginative play is another area in need of development to promote the early learning goals. Insufficient opportunity is provided for children to develop early skills of building a character and most of the role play that they engaged in is sequencing of events and acting out of stories. Teachers would benefit from developing their skills of using a wider range of drama conventions to develop their children's learning, such as hot seating, freeze frame and flashbacks. This would provide pupils with more opportunities for developing their speaking and listening skills.
91. Provision for children in the foundation stage of learning is satisfactory overall with some good features, especially in music and movement. Teachers are still adapting and developing the provision to take account of new requirements. The support staff, particularly those who support children with special educational needs, are fully involved in the work and make an effective contribution to children's learning.
92. In all areas of learning, children with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. However, in nursery pupils who are above average attainers make good gains because of



the high expectations of them. In reception this is not the case and these pupils make unsatisfactory progress because they are not sufficiently challenged.

## ENGLISH

93. National test results for 2000 show that standards of attainment are well below national averages at the end of both key stages with very few pupils attaining the higher levels. Inspection evidence indicates a similar picture in Key Stage 1 but standards have risen from well below to just below the national average in Key Stage 2 and inspection evidence suggests that standards are rising. There is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2 where there is more focused teaching and learning, especially at the end of the key stage. Pupils with English as an additional language in Key Stage 2, make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils who are above average attainers make unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 but satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. This is because in Year 5 pupils are set by ability and in lessons tasks set are appropriately matched to their needs.
94. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment is well below that expected nationally. Analysis of data reveals that by the age of seven when the national tests are taken, two thirds of the pupils reach the lower levels of Level 2 in reading, there is however, still one third of pupils who are at Level 1 and below. In writing the majority of pupils achieve the lower levels of Level 2 of the National Curriculum, but none achieve higher than a Level 2. Writing has been identified as a priority in the school development plan and a focus for literacy action planning.
95. Inspection findings in Key Stage 1 show that standards in speaking, listening and writing are well below those expected nationally. Standards in reading are below national averages. Pupils' achievements are not high enough in speaking, listening and writing but are broadly satisfactory in reading but attainment is not high enough. The best rate of learning is in Year 2 because of good or better teaching. Pupils who have special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 because insufficient emphasis is placed on the teaching of basic skills in mainstream lessons. When they are withdrawn by the special educational needs co-ordinator they make sound gains in learning. However, her work on basic skills is not rigorously followed up in the classroom, with the exception of the work seen in Year 2 where one teacher in particular places a great emphasis on teaching correct letter formation, reading and writing in all of the subjects taught.
96. The reason for standards being so low is that there is insufficient emphasis placed upon the teaching of basic skills, especially for higher-attaining pupils in the reception class and in Year 1. This results in teachers in Year 2 having to catch up on teaching skills that should have previously been covered earlier in the key stage. However, in the inspection week examples of good teaching and learning were seen in Year 2. For example, in one class pupils were gaining experience of poetry from other cultures and thinking of other ways of presenting a poem through speech. A traditional poem, Hush Little Baby, an Afro-American lullaby from North America was chosen and was familiar to many of the pupils. A group of pupils worked on the poem, changing words and meanings and successfully read their new poems back to the other pupils. In speaking and listening, pupils have very short attention spans, they can sequence events, but do not have developed awareness of the listener. They do not include details in speaking, and in reading they stumble over unknown words because their word attack skills are not sufficiently well developed. They cannot describe what characters are like, and whilst they can remember specific points in a story, their skills of prediction are not secure.
97. Standards in reading in Key Stage 1 were well below those expected nationally in the 2000 standard attainment tests. In the sample of readers across the ability range, pupils were unclear of the difference between an author and an illustrator. However, they could differentiate between fiction and non-fiction books and use a dictionary searching using the first two letters of words. However, they are not able to use a wide enough range of reading strategies to enable them to decode text and extract meaning to enable them to read fluently and independently. Pupils are eager to read to adults and to each other in guided reading. However, for some pupils who take books home there is little opportunity to read to their parents and this limits their ability to develop their reading skills and enjoyment of books other than in school. Overall pupils make better progress in their reading than in writing.
98. In writing pupils are starting to use word books and are aware of capital letters and full stops, but do not use them consistently. They have difficulty in distinguishing between a sentence and a line of writing and they often confuse their tenses.

99. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in speaking and listening are just below average. Pupils can identify information in text and talk about it and when reading poetry they can discuss emotive words, they can agree plans for investigations and in plenary sessions they can sum up their findings. For example, In dance they can identify and discuss qualities in performance, but many pupils have difficulty in talking from personal experience. However, as a result of outstanding teaching, pupils in Year 6 get many opportunities to develop their skills in speaking and listening and demonstrate increasing confidence and competence in this area of learning. For example, pupils had been learning how to write short poems known as kennings and perform them with actions, modelled on the example of reading and performance given by their teacher. However, some teachers do not present pupils with a wide enough range of opportunities to learn to speak to different audiences, or use drama as an important facilitator to further develop their competencies in speaking and listening. Opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills are presented in class discussions and through pupils working together, discussing the work they are engaged in. A significant factor in raising attainment in speaking and listening is the quality of teaching at the end of the key stage and the high quality of concerts and school productions, but at present there is inconsistent speaking and listening throughout the key stage, and this contributes to the low standards that many pupils attain.
100. Standards in reading are in line with national averages for pupils of average and above average ability, but pupils who have special educational needs and those below average do not achieve the expected levels. As there is a high percentage of these pupils in Year 6, standards in reading are below national averages. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are able to research independently and understand the library coding system. Most pupils can use the dictionary and the higher ability can search for words using the first four letters of the word. They can talk about the plot and characters in stories and also discuss features of a range of fiction and non-fiction within their experience. Pupils are enthusiastic about reading and are keen to further develop their skills by responding to the challenges set by teachers, especially the high expectations set in Year 6 where pupils are asked to visualise phrases used by authors in an attempt to develop their creative responses. Reading books are regularly taken home and some pupils read to their parents and others read on their own. When interviewed, pupils in Year 6 see reading as important to 'stretch your ability to higher standards and to help us learn in other subjects.' However, below average attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are unclear about their sounds and spelling which hamper their attempts to read accurately. When presented with work sheets, a significant number of pupils in the younger classes at Key Stage 2 cannot read at the level expected for their age, so make unsatisfactory progress. The whole school has a time allocated for reading but this time is not well used or useful to the pupils because reading skills are not regularly taught and the principles underpinning guided reading and shared reading are not consistently applied.
101. Standards in writing are poor in Years 3 and 4. However, by the end of the Key Stage 2, due to good teaching and learning, pupils are beginning to catch up with standards expected for their age, but as yet these remain low and are below the national average. However, once pupils reach Year 6 there is again the striving to catch up and pupils become highly motivated and enthusiastic in their learning. Pupils' range of writing includes, creative and extended writing, writing instructions, writing play-scripts, biographies and auto-biographies, writing poetry and journalistic writing. There are examples of drafting and re-drafting, but a particular weakness is the lack of information communication technology to develop pupils' drafting and writing skills. Pupils experiment with opening sentences in writing which grip the reader's attention. They are starting to self correct using basic proof reading skills. However, their spelling is unsatisfactory and not all pupils use punctuation consistently. Throughout both key stages aspects of the literacy hour are not effectively implemented. For example, there is a lack of consistency in teaching reading and writing with many examples of pupils practising skills in isolation. This lack of learning in a rigorous context has a negative effect on standards attained. Although reading, writing and handwriting are an integral part of literacy hour they are taught separately at a different time and basic literacy skills are not taught through other subjects. In addition, pupils do not always apply what they have learnt in the literacy hour to other subjects in the curriculum. Although good examples of handwriting and presentation were seen in the school there is inconsistency across the school in the teaching of handwriting. For example, pupils practise their handwriting in their literacy book and some in handwriting books with guidelines, but what they have learnt is not rigorously followed up in other subjects. The best examples of writing were seen the two Year 6 classes and one Year 5 class.
102. Overall teaching is satisfactory but with weaknesses in Key Stage 1, where it is unsatisfactory. These weaknesses are directly linked to low teacher expectation, slow pace, insufficient rigour in the teaching of basic skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening and the use of a limited range of teaching strategies. The best examples of literacy teaching were seen in Year 6 and Year 2 with several outstanding features in the Year 6 class. For example, the teacher of the top set of pupils in Year 6

recognises the pupils' obstacles to learning. He regularly talks to pupils in an attempt to increase their confidence and has very high expectations of what pupils should achieve. He models phrases, sentence structures using descriptive vocabulary based upon using adjectives and adverbs that conjure up vivid images. This is then reflected in pupils' writing. For example, when writing about the 'Snow Queen' one pupil wrote 'Her eyes were a piercing jade blue colour, the glare of which made you shiver'.

103. A particular weakness is in the marking of pupils' work. There is a policy for marking and a marking code written in 2000. However, although the marking code was displayed in classrooms to inform pupils, there was little evidence of this code seen in the work that had been marked. The inconsistency of marking ranged from a good quality to very poor where some work was not marked and mistakes in spelling, grammar and punctuation not corrected. Pupils are not always encouraged to check their written work effectively and do not always use dictionaries often enough. They do not look at their work together routinely to see if it can be improved and not all teachers use plenary sessions well to improve this technique. Where teaching is best, (Year 2 and Year 6) teachers have confidence in their subject knowledge, which they deliver at a brisk pace and use questioning techniques effectively to challenge and stimulate pupils' thinking and understanding. They have high expectations of what the pupils can achieve and assess and monitor the individual pupils' work effectively so as to plan for future lessons. Excellent marking was seen in Year 6. The teachers are very keen to give instant feedback to pupils to help them improve the quality of their work. Behaviour management was generally good in all classes. In some classes a number of the above teaching qualities were not in place, especially in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 1 there is a tendency in some years to set the same tasks for all abilities of pupils. This has a negative effect on pupils who are of a lower ability and find difficulty in understanding and completing some tasks and the underachievement of more able pupils who are capable of more challenging work and lack opportunities to develop independence in their own learning. Although the newly qualified teachers are getting support in their teaching they have classes where the behaviour is not always conducive to learning. Further guidance needs to be given to them to develop their skills of choosing activities that grip pupils attention and passion for learning as this will aid behavioural management.
104. The school has adopted and implemented the literacy hour. However, the effectiveness of the strategy is undermined by the lack of rigorous use of assessment in Key Stage 1 to inform teachers' planning and the weakness of teaching of basic skills, such as spelling, phonics, punctuation, speaking and listening, handwriting, word processing and strategies to enable pupils to read and write independently. In Key Stage 2, teachers keep very detailed assessments of pupils' achievements and the quality of marking in Year 6 is exemplary. This is a contributory factor to the good gains made in their learning. Not all teachers fully understand the principles of teaching the National Literacy Strategy, especially in the range of teaching methods that they can use, and this has a negative effect on pupils' achievements. There is a joint leadership within the English curriculum, one co-ordinator for Key Stage 1 and one for Key Stage 2. This arrangement is unsatisfactory because a clear overview of standards is not apparent and examples of best practice have not been identified and shared among the teachers. Whilst an effective start has been made in interpreting national data, insufficient guidance has been given to teachers on how best to teach basic skills, especially in the lower classes of Key Stage 1. At the time of the inspection both co-ordinators were absent because of illness. There is a lack of cohesion in the teaching and learning of English throughout the school. There is no regular monitoring of classroom practice to enable effective methods to be shared amongst all staff and so develop a range of teaching styles for individual teachers. The current organisation of each key stage being co-ordinated by a different member of staff militates against a cohesive approach being adopted.
105. There is an English policy but this is too brief to be of support to the development of the subject. Resources are satisfactory overall. Both key stages have their own library which are appropriately resourced with a range of books, both fiction and non-fiction, as is the reading scheme. However, there is room for expanding the range of books to further to support pupils' research skills and to widen their experiences in reading.
106. Since the previous inspections the infant school and junior school have amalgamated and it is not possible to give information about St James Primary School in terms of standards from the previous inspection, as this is its first inspection.

## **MATHEMATICS**

107. In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-old pupils, standards were well below those achieved by most schools. The percentage of pupils reaching higher levels was well below the national average. When compared with similar schools, standards were well below the average. As this is a

newly amalgamated school it is not possible to compare trends over previous years. Attainment is not good enough when compared with similar schools and national averages. The 2000 test results for seven-year-old pupils were well below national standards and well below averages when compared to similar schools. The number of pupils achieving higher levels is very low. The school has rightly identified the need to raise standards in both key stages and the present system of setting in Key Stage 2 is having a positive effect on raising standards.

108. The inspection findings show that by the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is presently well below national averages and in Key Stage 2 it is below national average. In Key Stage 1 all groups of pupils are underachieving, pupils with special educational needs do not make sufficient gains in their learning. In Key Stage 2, standards are slowly rising. This is because the setting for numeracy has only just been introduced and has not been in place long enough to have an impact on standards. The better teaching seen in lessons is due to teachers' familiarity with the numeracy strategy, and this is having a significant impact on pupils' learning, however, inspection findings show that whilst there is evidence to suggest that some progress has been made, pupils' achievements, especially at the end of Key Stage 1, could be better. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are making satisfactory progress and their achievement overall is satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment, but attainment is still below that expected of pupils of this age. Pupils generally respond well to the teaching of numeracy lessons. Pupils in Year 6 have good skills of calculation and quickly use a good range of strategies to solve problems about plotting a graph in four quadrants. Less able pupils can, for example, work out the conversion of improper fractions but their skills are below those expected for their age. Their range of knowledge of other aspects of the subject is limited. For example, they have little understanding of the use of unknowns in algebra or of triangular numbers, but they do have a secure knowledge of place value and decimals. The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 is very low and the majority has difficulty in quickly recalling the numbers that make ten and more. They have understood the operations of addition and subtraction but have not developed fully the operation of multiplication and even the more able pupils have difficulty counting correctly to and from 200 in 2s, 3s, 5s, 10s and 20s, for example. They frequently cannot calculate mentally problems such as 37 minus 8 using appropriate strategies and explain how they do it. They show a basic level of awareness of numbers but their present level is below that expected for their age. The reason for low attainment is due to the fact that insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils to use their skills across other subjects and basic skills of the four number operations, are not rigorously taught in the Reception classes and Year 1. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have difficulty in partitioning 'teens' numbers and larger numbers into 'tens' and 'units'; they can recognise a quarter and a half, but struggle with the concept of three quarters. They can name properties of three-dimensional shapes, but have difficulty explaining lines of symmetry and cannot identify that multiplication is repeated addition. Their skills of estimation are weak. Pupils struggle with writing figures and word numbers to 100, but they can position numbers to 100 on a number line. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is below that expected nationally, but pupils' achievements are satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils are making sound progress in developing their calculator skills and in science they can record and measure estimates and readings from scales to a suitable degree of accuracy. However, they experience difficulty in using four operations to solve word problems involving length, mass and capacity.
109. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with better teaching in Key Stage 2. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning. However there are weaknesses in the teaching at Key Stage 1, which is unsatisfactory overall, because at present, teachers are not rigorously adhering to the numeracy strategy framework and are not always using the higher levels in Key Stage 1 to challenge pupils further. This is one of the reasons why standards are too low. This is especially the case of higher-attaining pupils. This results in pupils consolidating their knowledge rather than extending it and leads to rates of progress being inconsistent. However in mental mathematics this is not the case because pupils are effectively challenged. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and give clear explanations and the pace is brisk but not all pupils can respond to the quick fire of questions. In the very good lessons seen in Year 6 the teacher challenged pupils in giving examples of improper fractions and mixed numbers; he used humour effectively to challenge pupils' thinking and maintained very positive relationships so that a secure learning environment was created within which pupils could learn effectively. In both key stages teachers have good questioning skills which enable pupils to articulate their thoughts. In information and communication technology lessons in Key Stage 2 the teachers encouraged pupils to practise what they had learnt previously in mathematics when asked to carry out calculations using formulas in a spreadsheet. Time is used effectively especially in the mental mathematics sessions and this contributes to the pupils making good gains in their learning. In mental number sessions, teachers pay good attention to the different attainment of pupils in each class. This usually provides appropriate challenge for all the pupils. Planning shows a differentiated approach to the tasks and teachers use data from

assessments to help match the work correctly. However in Year 1 and the Reception classes, pupils are given low level tasks that are not always challenging and pupils easily complete the activities. Teachers' planning often does not sufficiently account for what pupils have already learnt and teachers could be using more challenging objectives.

110. Learning objectives are clear, for example, a lesson for the youngest pupils was planned for learning at three different levels of addition: counting on, counting two more and counting numbers to 50. The range of teaching used is generally good. For example, the use of an overhead projector with the oldest pupils helps them focus on the significant issues they need to take into account and they are able to demonstrate their mental reasoning well, showing how they have worked things out. In a minority of lessons, the pupils lose interest when they are not sufficiently challenged but, overall, discipline is well kept. Pupils with special educational needs are offered appropriate individual support and make sound progress in Key Stage 2, but in Key Stage 1 progress is inconsistent and is unsatisfactory overall. Teachers' marking is variable and the best marking suggests ways to improve. However, there are insufficient opportunities provided for pupils to use computers to support their learning, and in Key Stage 1 the teaching of basic skills of number formation, setting out of work and using a variety of recording methods is unsatisfactory overall, and this has a negative effect on pupils' learning and subsequent attainment.
111. During the week of inspection, in both key stages examples of effective short-term learning were seen, but overall the quality of learning is better in Key Stage 2 than it is in Key Stage 1. This is most clearly seen in the work samples where there is sufficient recording of work in Key Stage 1. The setting of classes at Key Stage 2 and in Year 2 is starting to have a positive effect on raising standards because tasks are being set for pupils which match their prior attainment. In Key Stage 1, pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress. In Key Stage 2 their rates of progress are inconsistent but are satisfactory overall. When these pupils are working with support staff they make good progress because of the individual attention that they receive. All the pupils benefit from sessions of mental number work based on the National Numeracy Strategy Framework because the oral questions challenge pupils at several different levels. The work of the pupils in Year 2 and in Key Stage 2 shows good rates of achievement because of the good or better quality of teaching. For example higher-attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4 progress from completing sums such as doubling numbers to 50 to the calculation of two and three digit numbers and their work is tidy. In a lesson in Year 5 pupils learnt well how to decide which information was necessary to complete a bar chart and answer mathematical problems. In a lesson in Year 6, pupils quickly used their greater knowledge of graphs to make informed decisions and answer easily with good explanations.
112. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory overall, but the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to look at the implementation of numeracy across other subjects of the curriculum. This slows down pupils' rates of progress, because pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to apply the skills that they have learnt in other contexts. Key support staff are well trained and qualified. A good system to chart the progress of pupils following the results of their National Curriculum assessments at age seven through Key Stage 2 has been established. However, this has not yet fully impacted on monitoring and target setting across the key stages. The school provides an appropriate balance of time allowed for teaching the subject. Teachers are beginning to set targets for individual pupils' improvement but this is at the early stages of development. Resources are satisfactory and they are now used to support pupils' learning.

## SCIENCE

113. The results of the 2000 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 indicate that standards are below the national averages in comparison with all schools. However, these results are close to the average when compared to similar schools. From the evidence of work seen during the inspection, pupils, including those with special needs, attain standards that are well below the expected level at Key Stage 1 and in line with expectations at Key Stage 2. Achievement is better in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. Very good teaching at the end of Key Stage 2 significantly improves pupil knowledge and understanding. At Key Stage 1 low levels of literacy and unsatisfactory curriculum provision due to low allocation of time prevents similar levels of achievement. The average points scores for Key Stage 2 national tests over the last two years are at the expected level for all schools nationally. This represents good achievement in comparison with the other core subjects in the school.
114. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' achievement is better than that of the other core subjects. A major reason for this is the school's efforts and successes in promoting experimental and investigative science.

By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are making good progress in carrying out investigations because teachers give good explanations and clearly identify what pupils need to do in order to ensure that tests are carried out fairly and accurately. During a Year 6 study of light pupils develop an understanding of the principles of observation and recording when they prove the changing size of shadows is dependent on the distance from the light source. Year 2 pupils make very good progress when investigating electrical circuits but have poor ability in communicating their findings. A lack of relevant knowledge and understanding of the processes of fair testing considerably weaken pupils' attainment. Teachers in Year 3 and Year 4 make good progress in rectifying this. They enable pupils to examine and research what needs to be consistent in their experimentation. A lack of literacy skills profoundly prevents pupils further responding to suggestions and making personal observations. At Key Stage 1 pupils receive a below average allocation for science further limiting the progress they make. Opportunities for pupils to use science skills of prediction, hypothesis, cause and effect and synthesis across the curriculum are also limited. Pupils with special educational needs are also withdrawn from some science lessons further limiting their experiences. At present, the school has not sufficiently developed a coherent approach of teaching basic skills through different subjects, and this is a contributory factor to the low standards that pupils attain.

115. At Key Stage 2 there is a good science curriculum in place and pupils receive a balanced programme in all attainment targets. Pupils enhance their understanding of life processes by studying mini-beasts in the local environment. They investigate the living conditions of the woodlice. Resources produced by teachers aid recording of their findings. Pupils studying healthy growing at Key Stage 1 are beginning to establish cause and effect in the relationship between exercise and increased heart rate but they are not able to record their findings in the form of expected outcomes. Pupils' use of ICT in science is underdeveloped throughout the school and charts and graphical representation are not always used to present experiment findings. In the study of materials Year 3 pupils measure the absorbency of paper and the strength of various sizes of magnets. Other Key Stage 2 pupils accurately measure temperature when dealing with insulators and thermal retention. Standards in numeracy do not match those of science and the most able pupils are not expected to use standard measurements and units at the higher levels.
116. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory with excellent teaching seen in Year 2. This suggests that standards in Key Stage 1 are poised to rise, but at present, the quality of teaching has not had time to fully impact on standards in Key Stage 1, due to the low starting points of these pupils. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good. Good use is made of resources in practical experiments and collaborative group research. As a result pupils enjoy their lessons and respond positively to teacher requests to investigate a wide range of phenomena. The significant difference between overall outcomes as defined by standards achieved in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is linked to teacher expectations. Scrutiny of pupils' work reveals younger pupils are not exposed early enough to structured investigations and there is a lack of recording using appropriate literacy skills. As a result pupils at the end of this stage do not achieve standards appropriate to their age. In Key Stage 2 the scheme of work for science quickly identifies the key skills to be learnt and lesson outcomes are planned accordingly. Teachers at this stage have good knowledge of the subject and give clear instructions. Because of this Year 6 pupils quickly work out the differences between opaque, transparent and translucent materials. They then use this knowledge to make quick associations about light travel within an experiment format. They understand that light hitting opaque materials causes shadows and that these change in relation to the distance from the light source. Teachers plan lessons at Key Stage 2 to make associations with everyday life. This results in good short-term progress. Pupils use their understanding of water and gas evaporation to make sense of the water cycle phenomena in daily weather conditions. Expectations for the most able pupils are not high enough throughout the school in terms of writing-up their findings. Further personal reflection, recording and evaluation would enable these pupils to retain knowledge and make better progress at the next stage of their learning. Teachers are not consistently challenging these pupils with specially planned work in lessons, this results in pupils consolidating their learning rather than extending it and overall they are under-challenged. Pupils with special education needs make good progress at Key Stage 2. They improve their understanding of scientific concepts by working in mixed-ability groups and by following carefully planned investigations, sometime with good classroom support. An excellent lesson of science was seen in Year 2, but the teacher had to go back to very basic explanations in order to move all groups of pupils on in their learning. This he did very swiftly by offering good explanations of very basic knowledge about electricity, using a variety of resources from posters to a string layout representing circuits.
117. Good co-ordination of the subject has ensured the continuity of study through appropriate programmes of study at Key Stage 2. However, since the amalgamation of the two schools this has not yet been carried

over into the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. In the upper school very good monitoring of planning and teaching ensures that future targets are appropriate and that the subject development plan has raising standards as its central focus. There are good procedures in place to assess pupils' work and information from these is used for personal target setting. However, these are not consistently used, especially in Key Stage 1. Present planning is not sufficiently organising tasks with this in mind. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are significantly improved when the most able pupils receive additional tuition at the local secondary school and when other pupils receive additional teaching in booster classes arranged at the school. This is a contributory factor to the good rates of progress in Key Stage 2.

118. The present arrangements for science in Key Stage 2 are an effective exemplar of what standards pupils can achieve when work is well planned and teacher confidence is secure. The rates of pupils' progress now need to be improved in Key Stage 1, especially in reception classes and Year 1, so that standards can continue to rise. Teachers in Key Stage 1 need to raise their expectations of what pupils can do and follow the excellent examples of teaching in Year 2.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

119. Standards in art and design by the end of Key Stage 1 are in line with national expectations and all groups of pupils including those with special educational needs make good gains in their learning. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards are above expectations for pupils of this age and all groups of pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment because of the excellent teaching in Year 6. The co-ordination of this subject is good and the subject leader has placed a great deal of emphasis on raising the status of this subject throughout the school. She has transformed one of the classrooms into an art and design and design and technology room and has displayed very good examples of pupils' work .
120. By the end of both key stages pupils explore and develop their ideas through a good range of learning opportunities. They are taught how to mix paint properly and are developing good knowledge of painting techniques. Pupils have produced some good examples of weaving, embroidery sewing and their collage work demonstrates their ability to experiment with a full range of materials including pasta, paper, natural objects and man made fibres. Pupils in Key Stage 1 can work in the style of Monet and Van Gogh and use colour well. They understand the meaning of tone and texture and apply their knowledge to the good examples of collage work seen. Pupils have good taste in colour. They use their imagination appropriately in interpreting design. For example when questioned about the expressions on the 30 African masks pupils made, they explained that they represented courage. Art is used to support other subject areas of the curriculum for example pupils in Year 2 have produced a colourful display portraying the Great Fire of London linked to their history topic. The array of bright uses of colour produced a very vibrant display. In Year 1 art is very effectively used to reinforce number formation and the concept of ordering number. In literacy pupils used different hues of the colour blue to reinforce the vocabulary learnt of the poem studied 'Wishing on a star'.
121. By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment exceeds that expected of this age group. Pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. In Year 3 pupils have embroidered mini beasts in connection with their science topic. Year 4 pupils have drawn and painted wobbly objects and in Year 5 some very good examples were seen of art being used to support pupils' understanding of contrast in literacy, with pupils experimenting in chalk and charcoal to interpret a poem by Walter de la Mare. This enabled the pupils to gain insights into the commonalties of artistic and creative forms used by both poets and artists to depict contrast and polarity. In Year 6 pupils have drawn very detailed and intricate depictions of Christ on the cross, clearly depicting the anguish suffered. Using Signorellis depiction of Hercules and Antaeus exploring the theme of conflict, pupils employed good techniques of smudging when working through the medium of chalk. Through undertaking this work pupils gained insights into how ancient Greeks represented aspects of their culture through art. Pupils also have good understanding of the difference between the style of Rubens and Mackintosh
122. The reason that pupils make such good gains in their learning is to do with the very rigorous teaching of skills, which are demonstrated by teachers' very good subject knowledge. The very good application of the policy for displays by the co-ordinator ensures that pupils always have access to excellence and therefore they know what they are striving towards in their end product. Excellent demonstrations by staff, especially in Key Stage 2, contribute to the high standards that pupils attain. For example in Year 6 the teacher demonstrated to his pupils how to turn a flat piece of card into a three-dimensional base for headwear. In order to make pupils feel secure he reminded them of the skills that they used to design their slippers in a previous design and technology lesson. Pupils quickly remembered what they had

learnt and made very good progress in the lesson. Pupils' skills in design are particularly impressive this is because the teacher has a background in theatre design and uses his knowledge to motivate his pupils so that they are aware of how what they have learnt can be applied to the real world of work.

123. Pupils have very good attitudes to work especially in Key Stage 2 where they strive for excellence in all that they do. They persevere on task and are good at evaluating their work and that of others. The quality of teaching is good with examples of excellent teaching seen in Year 6. Teachers give clear explanations and the majority is competent in the teaching of skills of art and design. Teachers manage their pupils well and this contributes to the good and often very good gains that pupils make in their learning. Resources for learning are good and they contribute to the high achievements of these pupils. The co-ordination of art is good. The co-ordinator monitors her subject well, especially standards that pupils attain, which are well documented in her co-ordinator's file. A further contributory factor to the good standards that pupils attain is that there is a high emphasis placed on the quality of displays, which are regularly monitored by the co-ordinator.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

124. Very few lessons were observed due to timetable arrangements. Judgements on attainment are made on scrutinising pupils' work, teachers' plans, displays and interviews with pupils. Pupils' attainment is satisfactory at the end of both key stages and all groups of pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning. Pupils' displayed work shows that a range of media has been used and design technology skills have been taught. In discussions with the pupils they say they have opportunities to plan and evaluate their products. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are able to select materials to suit purposes, for example in Year 1 pupils know which materials to choose when weaving. They know the difference between natural materials and man-made materials. They can describe which materials are appropriate for weaving due to their flexibility and make sound gains in learning, because the teachers effectively model for the pupils how this is done. By the end of Year 2, pupils are taught basic joining techniques and when designing houses they give appropriate explanations to show how hinges work. They know that when using sellotape, further reinforcement is sometimes needed as joins are not always secure. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils display sound skills in the design and construction of electrical switches and have opportunities to develop their creativity and imagination producing quality products. They are taught about how they might improve their designs. The majority of pupils are successful and confident when given the opportunity to discuss the skills and techniques used, the choice of material and how the finished product could be improved upon. Annotated designs were seen for switches and these were clearly labelled. Pupils are aware that both the function and appearance of a product are important and that consumers sometimes buy goods for their appearance rather than the function. For example, when making slippers, several pupils made ornate designs in order to produce 'eye catching' products. The scrutiny of work reveals that pupils are taught specific skills, processes and knowledge based upon consideration of the needs of consumers. For example pupils could explain that the appearance of their slippers needed to be eye catching if consumers were to buy the product. There is a very good link with the local secondary school and older pupils have opportunities to use the workshops to design and make book ends and CD storage systems. These are produced to a good standard. By the end of Key Stage 2, rates of progress improve because in these classes teachers have very secure knowledge of the design process.
125. There is a draft policy and scheme of work that outlines key elements of the subject and makes appropriate reference to the national guidance for the subject. The co-ordinator is new to the subject, but already an effective start has been made on collating information about standards and a portfolio of work exemplifying strengths and weaknesses in pupils' achievements is being developed. The pupils are well aware of the safety issues of using various tools and materials and this is stressed in teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are offered extra help if needed and make sound progress. The school has a good set of tools and materials to enable an appropriate range of techniques to be taught. However, whilst an effective start has been made at implementing the full range of the programmes of study opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are limited. The consistent teaching of skills underpinning the design process are contributory factors to the high standards that pupils attain at the end of Key Stage 2.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

126. No lessons were observed in this subject in Key Stage 1 due to timetable arrangements and there was little recorded evidence of work previously completed. Judgements on standards at Key Stage 1 are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' medium-term planning and interviews with teachers and



pupils. Pupils at both key stages, including those with special educational needs, are attaining standards below those expected nationally at the end of both key stages, and their achievements are not high enough. However, pupils' achievements could be better if further emphasis was placed on developing pupils' skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, because there is a distinct lack of written work.

127. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are becoming familiar with their own locality and compare and contrast physical features with those of the Isle of Struay. Comparisons are made between transport and jobs there and in the pupils' own locality. Pupils learn their own address and investigate the ways in which they travel to school. Year 2 pupils learn the names of the countries that make up the United Kingdom. Very little work is recorded and the quality of pupil's learning is unsatisfactory. Visits in the locality help to develop the pupils' knowledge of their immediate area but pupils are not receiving a relevant and worthwhile experience in geography.
128. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils compare the physical and human features of Chembakolli with those in their locality. They become increasingly aware of geographical language and use simple maps to aid their work. They know several facts relating to the accident at Bhopal in 1984, and they know that the river Ganges is sacred and the weather in India is different to that of Britain. Year 5 pupils undertake field study work on traffic flow in Blackheath, car parking facilities and types of shops. Subsequent work will involve pupils in making a decision about whether the High Street is too congested and pupils will write to the local Council expressing their views about traffic in the town centre. Year 3 pupils study a detailed map of the locality and plan a route from school to the sports centre in Oldbury. They investigate what land and buildings in the locality are used for. Year 5 pupils study rainfall levels in different countries, use a plan of the school to identify where water is supplied and know where water is used in a house. However, they do not present their findings using a range of graphs and charts. Year 6 study the water cycle and know about evaporation and condensation. Investigation is made into water collection and drainage areas around school and areas of concern are identified. This provides good links with science. The course of a river is studied and geographical terms such as erosion, meander, estuary and waterfall used. Links are made with history during work on settlements on the River Severn.
129. Whilst pupils study a broad range of topics their understanding is limited and only in the later years do they begin to use the subject to develop their extended writing skills. Their ability to use geographical vocabulary is limited and many find difficulty in comparing their locality with that of other areas. Pupils cannot fully evaluate evidence and draw conclusions and only a minority is able to follow a route on a map. Many pupils are unable to offer opinions, for example as to the impact of opening a large supermarket on local shops and very few can offer an opinion as to the type of shops that may be found in a shopping centre.
130. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are satisfactory. Pupils do not readily volunteer answers to questions, and teachers have to use their good intervention skills in drawing out responses from them. Behaviour is satisfactory but variable. There was also evidence of inappropriate behaviour when pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Relationships between pupils and with teachers are usually good. On occasions when pupils with a special educational need do not receive adequate support in the classroom behaviour problems can occur and this contributes towards other pupils in the class making unsatisfactory progress.
131. The quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory. In Key Stage 2 it ranges from being good to unsatisfactory but is satisfactory overall. Lessons are often well planned and pupils are carefully supervised on visits outside school. However, insufficient use is made of individual education plans to set appropriate tasks for pupils with a special educational need and this results in them making inconsistent progress. Short-term progress is satisfactory overall but over time pupils do not have sufficient learning opportunities to develop geographical skills. Overall learning in both key stages is unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 1 there is not enough emphasis on the development of writing skills. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory in Key Stage 2 but throughout the school, with exception of Years 5 and 6, the expectations of the teachers are too low. This is because there has been a lack of curriculum monitoring in this subject and insufficient attention has been paid by senior management to ensure that learning objectives identified in planning are suitably challenging for these pupils. The school could usefully review the allocation of support staff to ensure they are placed where they will be of most benefit, for example, helping pupils develop their skills of literacy and numeracy. Assessment procedures for the subject are under-developed and are unsatisfactory and this contributes to the low standards that these pupils attain. Good use is made of visits in the locality and residential visits have a beneficial impact both on the development of the pupil's geographical and social skills.

132. Due to the recent amalgamation, the co-ordinator's role is being developed. A job description is not yet in place and work is only beginning in using the national guidance documentation to develop a scheme of work for the school. Resources for the subject are satisfactory. The promotion of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in geography have not yet been fully considered. There is no monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning though teachers' plans are monitored each half term, but this at present cannot secure high academic standards because it is not rigorous enough in identifying that teachers' expectations are sufficiently high.

## HISTORY

133. Due to timetable arrangements very few lessons of history were seen. Judgements on attainment are also based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, teachers' plans and interviews with teachers and pupils. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in history, including those with a special educational need, is below what is expected of pupils of this age and achievements could be better. This is largely due to the fact that there is insufficient recording of pupils' written work. Standards by the age of eleven are as expected for pupils of that age. The coverage of historical topics, particularly in Key Stage 2, is wide ranging and with further emphasis on the recording of work and the use of the library, historical artefacts and information and communication technology to aid research, enquiry and make deductions, standards could be raised further.
134. By the age of seven, pupils are aware of people from the past in their own family and draw up a simple family tree to develop a sense of chronology. This enables them to sequence different forms of toys that were used in the past and in the present day. Pupils can compare and contrast modern toys, but the majority is unable to use simple writing conventions such as bullet points and note taking. They learn about Florence Nightingale and, in some detail, study the events of the Crimean War. Pupils discuss how countries sometimes fight against each other and learn that British soldiers were fighting against Russians in the Crimea. They identify on a map where the Crimea is and how Florence Nightingale would have got there. In their work they are aided by an excellent display that depicts a nurse in the authentic uniform of that time. Pupils also study the Fire of London and know about Samuel Pepys and his diaries. The planning for the lesson observed in Year 2 showed evidence of thought being given to the use of information and communication technology to promote research skills and written work. However, this is not yet securely established. Whilst pupils show interest in their work and display sound listening skills, writing is under-developed and is not adequately promoted in other classes in the key stage, especially in Year 1. As a result there is a lack of evidence of recorded work. The use of resources such as CD-ROMs is at an early stage of development and is unsatisfactory overall.
135. By the age of eleven, pupils have studied a wide range of historical topics. There is, in the early years of Key Stage 2, continued evidence of the under-developed writing skills of the pupils which results in an unsatisfactory level of recorded work. Throughout the key stage in Years 4, 5, and 6 this is starting to happen. The use of information and communication technology is unsatisfactory and only in the later years of Key Stage 2 are pupils beginning to develop their research skills. Pupils study the Tudor era. They know about Henry VIII and his wives and study aspects such as clothes, homes and voyages of discovery. They know about invaders and settlers such as the Romans, Celts and Saxons and are aware that place names are linked to these people. This is linked to a local study of the settlements on the River Severn. The Victorian era is studied in Year 5 and evidence shows that some of the higher-attaining pupils are beginning to develop their extended writing skills through work on the plight of Victorian children and the differences between modern and Victorian schools. In Year 6 a detailed study of Ancient Greece locates the country in place and time. The origins of the Olympic Games are investigated and Greek warfare studied using evidence from maps and illustrations. The main characters and events from a battle are researched, as are Greek gods such as Zeus, Poseidon and Aphrodite. The role of the theatre, architecture, the alphabet, schools, Athens and Sparta and Greek scholars are also studied and there is evidence that the research skills of the pupils and their writing skills are developing well. This is because the teachers in the later years of Key Stage 2 have higher expectations of what the pupils can achieve and the pupils respond to this challenge and demonstrate that they are capable of attaining higher standards. Work is also linked to higher expectations in literacy generally and to the good and sometimes very good teaching of writing skills. There is a need for these skills to be developed at a much earlier stage of the pupils' life in school by raising the quality of teaching of basic skills in Key Stage 1 and younger classes in Key Stage 2. The learning of the pupils is enhanced by very good permanent displays of historical artefacts, maps and pictures linked to the topics being covered.

136. The quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory. It is better in Key Stage 2 than it is in Key Stage 1, this is because there is appropriate emphasis placed upon the teaching of historical skills of enquiry. Teachers have secure knowledge and explanations that they give to pupils at the start of the lesson when sharing with them the purpose of the lesson. Teachers use good questioning techniques whereby pupils feel secure in answering, even though the answer might be lacking in detail.
137. In lessons pupils behave well and show that they are interested in the work. They show sound listening skills and the higher-attaining pupils demonstrate a willingness to answer questions. However, often their responses are lacking in clarity and are not in complete sentences. Pupils respond to the planning and enthusiasm of the teacher, which in the lessons seen, was never less than satisfactory. Resources are well used and there is evidence that teachers plan for the abilities of different groups of pupils. However, often this work does not do anything to increase the writing abilities of the pupils because insufficient thought has been given to planning appropriate activities, which would complement skills that pupils had been taught in the literacy hour. Visits to the Oak House and Black Country Museums and Selly Oak Manor are well used to develop knowledge of the Tudors and Victorians. Throughout the school little thought has yet been given to the development of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology throughout the curriculum. Assessment procedures have not yet been developed for the subject and are unsatisfactory overall. Through the work of the special needs co-ordinator teachers are aware that they must plan for the needs of individuals or groups of pupils. However, the poor development of their literacy skills, especially in Key Stage 1, is not improved by the inappropriate tasks sometimes given to lower-attaining pupils. In this respect their individual education plans are not taken into account. The special educational needs co-ordinator has provided some resources for the pupils and these should be further developed and used to meet the needs of these pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 1, but in Key Stage 2 these pupils make better progress because teachers match tasks to their needs.
138. The co-ordinator has only recently been appointed and a job description is not yet in place. Planning is being monitored each half term to ensure adequate coverage but there is no monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. The national guidance documentation is being used to ensure coverage of the required topics but the school has not yet developed its own scheme of work that meets the needs of the pupils, and activities planned do not sufficiently build upon pupils' prior attainment. For example, because pupils' skills in both literacy and numeracy are low, tasks set do not provide sufficient challenge and opportunity for pupils to improve their writing skills. Resources for the subject are at least satisfactory but more emphasis needs to be placed on acquiring and using information and communication technology software.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

139. Standards of attainment are below those expected nationally at the end of both key stages and pupils do not achieve as well as they can in relation to their prior achievement. Although an effective start has been made in using information communication technology as an integral part of learning, standards are below those expected nationally of 7 and 11 year olds. There is a lack of a coherent approach in the scheme of work to provide rigorous opportunities for its use. By Year 6, pupils have experienced elements of the required strands of the subject, but do not have sufficient opportunities to practise what they have learned in other areas of the curriculum. Word processing skills are unsatisfactory at the end of both key stages. Most pupils can load, save and retrieve information but have too few opportunities to interrogate a CD-ROM to seek further information. Pupils describe how they have used particular programs to handle data and how they have used logo to create geometric patterns, but they have limited awareness of the uses of information and communication technology in the wider world. Previous work includes examples of word processing, data handling and the use of art programs, but these were limited in demonstrating the full breadth of the programmes of study. There was little evidence of information and communication technology being taught or used to support other curriculum areas during the period of the inspection, although an effective start has been made in using information and communication technology in art and design and pupils in Year 4 have researched repeated pattern and are able to select areas of pattern, copy and resize them.
140. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils know the function of various keys. They know how to enter, delete and change fonts. In one lesson, pupils were asked to explore the use of sound as part of an activity to create tunes. They tried to do this, with some degrees of success and most made satisfactory progress, usually when assisted by a more able pupil. The pupils are able to use the mouse to select, drag and drop. Pupils have limited access to computers in each class and they are not used as frequently as one would expect. There is very little work on display to celebrate pupils' achievements. Pupils'

achievements at the end of Key Stage 1 are not high enough. Whilst pupils can open and close files, use a mouse and know the major functions of keys, they experience difficulty in communicating information using texts. Their knowledge of databases is limited and whilst they can use the mouse to match words and pictures they experience difficulty in refining simple sentences by making corrections.

141. When given the opportunity pupils show an interest in the subject and are very keen to use computers in their learning. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the computer and its uses and many describe, in great detail, their use at home. They also show a willingness to help each other. However at present the school does not make full use of the skills pupils have acquired at home and some pupils are under-challenged.
142. The teachers' own skills vary and several require further training to teach the whole of the programme of study effectively. While variable, the quality of teaching overall is satisfactory for example in Year 5 where the teacher successfully introduced the use of a spreadsheet. No monitoring of planning, classroom practice or pupils' work takes place. The co-ordinator is therefore unaware of the standards achieved in the school. Skill progression needs to be identified and linked to the topics studied in classes. Planning, which is currently unsatisfactory, should then be developed to teach pupils progressive skills that they can then practise and use across the whole curriculum. Resources across the school are inadequate with just 16 computers in a central resource area. There is a computer in some classrooms but the number of computers is too few when compared to the number of pupils. At present there is no link to the Internet. There is a good supply of software including a CD library but it is not all in use. There is no scheme of work at present. This results in planning overall being unsatisfactory because teachers do not have sufficient guidance on how to match tasks to pupils' needs. Where teaching is satisfactory, Year 5 and Year 6 teachers use the computer appropriately to support other subjects such as music and mathematics. There The computer club is well attended by pupils. As yet the use of information communication technology to support the full range of subjects is limited.

## **MUSIC**

143. Pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and their achievements are satisfactory. Pupils make good progress in music and by the time they leave the school, the quality of their knowledge and skills development is at a level above that expected for pupils of this age and achievement is very good. However, the knowledge and skills development is not secure in Key Stage 1 and pupils make inconsistent progress in their learning because not all teachers have secure subject knowledge. The best rates of progress are made in Year 2.
144. Singing in both key stages is good. It is well pitched, tuneful, and sung with good diction. For example, in the first assembly of the week pupils sang 'Father we love you' in a warm and reflective manner which set the tone for the assembly. In Year 6, pupils were performing in a recording studio scenario and singing with microphones and recording their efforts. The teacher who had first-hand experience of working and recording in studios, was able to influence the role play and demonstrate specific recording skills. The very high expectations demonstrated by bringing the elements of how music is used in the world of work, contributed to pupils making very good progress and achieving high standards at the end of the key stage.
145. The planned music programme is in line with the National Curriculum programmes of study for music. It covers both attainment targets for music and includes the musical elements of pulse, rhythm, form, dynamics and pitch. Pupils are also able to develop their skills in composing, reading notation, singing and playing instruments, individually or in a group. However, in Key Stage 1 opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of literacy through music are limited. Year 6 had been learning about the effect of different pitched notes played together to produce harmony and discord. They investigated which two notes sound the best when played together. Much of the work was learning about the elements of music and conventional notation. A particular weakness is the recording of compositions in the form of graphic scores that ought to be developmental across both key stages. However, in Key Stage 2 there is ample evidence of pupils' compositions through samples of recorded tapes which are of a high standard. A lesson observed in Year 1 found the pupils learning about the flute and the teacher had some plastic bottles which she used to demonstrate how to make a flute sound by blowing across the top of the bottle, much to the pupils' amazement. However, she invited some children to try for themselves. A good example of awe and wonder was seen when a boy managed to make a musical sound after blowing across the top of the bottle. This same class was able to differentiate between the styles of two different marches, a ceremonial march and a lively march style. In a Year 4 class the teacher had two contrasting paintings and pupils were encouraged to investigate the kinds of sounds that could describe the

paintings. Here the pupils were describing the feelings they had about the contrasting paintings, then to represent them in musical sound, leading to the next step of creating a graphic score of their compositions. This not only developed pupils' musical knowledge, but also enabled pupils to make good gains in using descriptive vocals. However, opportunities for writing their own scores were limited.

146. Music features in assemblies when pupils enter the hall quietly to recorded music playing and when singing hymns and choruses. For example, in the first assembly of the week the music playing as pupils entered was of Mandolin music by Vivaldi. The headteacher showed the pupils a mandolin and then gave a short demonstration. Visiting peripatetic teachers come weekly to teach brass, woodwind, strings and the headteacher gives tuition on the guitar. The violin, flute and clarinet instrumentalists achieve high standards and make good gains in their learning.
147. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. However, there was some evidence of good to very good teaching across the school. The best teaching is in Year 6. This is because the teacher has a passion for music and is knowledgeable about his subject. He generates a love of music to his pupils by engaging their emotions and by teaching them the vocabulary associated with feelings. In addition, he encourages his pupils to see pictures in their minds and values their creative responses. His teaching is inspirational and contributes to the very good attitudes that the oldest pupils have towards learning. Pupils are enthusiastic about music and enjoy their lessons and are keen to take part in school concerts and productions.
148. Leadership of the subject is very good. Music is co-ordinated by the performing arts co-ordinator and ample evidence was given of the integration of performing arts within the school curriculum and extra-curricular activities. The co-ordinator monitors standards through appraising and evaluating tape recordings of music. In spite of repeated requests, not all groups have produced documented evidence of work covered.
149. In a recent monitoring of the music curriculum it was clear in the evaluation that music is being taught in a consistent and progressive way in Key Stage 2. However, the evaluations of Key Stage 1 are not so clear. For example, evidence of medium-term plans are not in place and requests for evidence of planning have not been forthcoming. A published music scheme has been incorporated into the music curriculum to support those teachers who are not confident in teaching the subject but it has not had sufficient time to embed in the practices of the school.
150. Due to the amalgamation of the infant school and the junior school it is not possible to report on the improvement since the last inspection of St James Primary School as this is the schools' first inspection. The school has the potential to achieve very high standards due to the commitment and dedication of the subject co-ordinator.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

151. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1. Therefore judgement on attainment cannot be made. The majority of pupils make sound gains in their learning and they achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. There are good planning procedures in place that cover all the elements of the programme of study and this results in the pupils receiving a broad and balanced curriculum. However there is room for improvement.
152. Year 4 pupils use apparatus to create additional tension in their balancing but find sequencing at expected levels of ability very difficult. Pupils' achievement improves during focused and guided teaching but regresses when left to independent exploration as pupils lack skills of self evaluation. Year 5 pupils move purposely to a four-beat rhythm. Although they complete a satisfactory number of phased sequences their movement is unrefined and lacks poise.
153. In lesson observed at Key Stage 2, pupils display positive attitudes and behaviour is satisfactory, and pupils are keen to achieve and although many can only concentrate for short periods, they try hard to please. Year 5 pupils, including some with special needs, make good progress in co-ordinating a dance sequence. They collaborate well to move simultaneously and create a motif based on conflict and opposition. Year 4 pupils learn to distinguish between mirroring and matching movements in gymnastics and make sound progress in understanding symmetry in movement. In lessons teacher control is very good, establishing an atmosphere for reflection and refinement. Pupils' ability to observe and comment on movement is unsatisfactory and is restricted by a lack of technical vocabulary and confidence to articulate their feelings. Because of this, demonstration and observation of performance is often under

developed and opportunities for learning from mistakes are limited. Although no formal lessons were seen, extra-curricular games activities show that pupils are acquiring skills of explaining tactics that had not worked well when defending goals in a football game. Pupils were able to discuss the fairness of penalties and how important it was to cover the opponent. Pupils make sound gains in learning and it is evident that team spirit and morale are high. Skills taught in the extra-curricular clubs complement teachers' lesson planning and appropriate emphasis is placed upon practising, refining and developing movements.

154. Teaching is satisfactory overall with elements of good practice and all groups of pupils make sound gains in learning. Teachers' secure subject knowledge is revealed in the skilful assessments of what pupils do in lessons. Teachers help pupils to identify what their potential fears might be and encourage them to try hard. With this support pupils make satisfactory progress. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and manage time effectively. Planning is satisfactory with clear learning objectives identified. The previous scheme of work has been updated to meet Curriculum 2000 recommendations and provides for a stimulating breadth of activities for the pupils. Extra-curricular activities are good and supported by parents. They are well attended by pupils and dedicated staff give freely of their time to enable pupils to participate in a full range of activities. The curriculum is fully inclusive, girls thoroughly enjoy playing football. The school competes in a range of regional activities and inter-school matches and with an excellently run dance club these make a significant impact on standards. Present monitoring of the subject is in the very early stages of development. Resources are satisfactory and contribute to the sound gain pupils make in their learning.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

155. Due to the recent amalgamation of the schools it is not possible to make comparisons with the previous report. Evidence from this inspection indicates that the Locally Agreed Syllabus is being followed and that standards are below those expected by the age of seven and in line at the age of eleven. There is very little evidence of any recorded work by the end of Key Stage 1. However, the school is poised to make improvement due to the very good scheme of work recently put in place by the newly appointed subject co-ordinator.
156. The curriculum follows a well-defined programme of study in which the pupils have regular opportunities to learn about the major festivals and key elements of the Christian faith. They also learn about other major faiths of the world. Acts of collective worship make satisfactory links with class lessons. During the week of inspection, teachers gave inspiring insights to the pupils on being content with the most simple things in life such as the beauty of nature. The links with other areas of the curriculum such as literacy and information and communication technology are under-developed. Speaking and listening skills are encouraged but there is a weakness in the inclusion of extended writing skills in Key Stage 1 and in the early years of Key Stage 2. The pupils' learning is enhanced by the use of good quality artefacts as evidenced in displays such as that relating to Sikhism in Key Stage 1.
157. By the age of seven pupils begin to understand that people of different faiths wear clothing associated with religious practice. Artefacts are well used to illustrate a turban, kara, kirpan and kachha and the symbolic nature of these artefacts is well explained by teachers. Links are also made with special clothes worn, for example, at the pupil's own baptism. Higher-attaining pupils are able to answer questions about the symbolic meaning of light, but a majority of pupils fail to develop a secure understanding of the significance of religious artefacts to faith communities. Pupils know about the Nativity and the joy associated with a newborn baby. Pupils know several Bible stories and can retell them, for example the story of Jesus walking on water, but their knowledge of stories from other faiths is limited. In interviews with pupils they were unable to recount that there are similarities in various stories of the creation. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of the concept of belonging to a religious community is limited. Evidence of recorded work very sparse.
158. By the age of eleven pupils in Year 6 learn that a main teaching of Sikhism of the Guru Granth Sahib is equality. They discuss this with reference to race, gender and wealth and a majority of pupils show that they have developed a sound understanding. Pupils visit St. James's Church and learn about thea, font and lectern and about items of clothing such as the surplice and cassock. They discuss the meaning of the word 'worship' and are aware of that which is spiritual and that which is temporal. They learn about the difference between secular and religious texts. Famous figures such as Mother Theresa and Martin Luther King are studied and the pupils' work shows that they are taking care and pride in what they produce. There is evidence in displays around the school of prayers that pupils from both Key Stages have composed. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 learn about the Islam and Hindu religions and about the

signs and symbols that are associated with different religions. Pupils understand that each religion has its festivals and that Christians celebrate Harvest, Christmas, Easter and that Jesus is the Son of God and he rose from the dead.

159. By the end of Key Stage 2 there is growing evidence that pupils are being successfully encouraged to record their work and extend their writing skills. At present this is not encouraged at an earlier stage to support the pupil's work in literacy generally. When inspired by very good teaching a majority of pupils are able to develop a sound understanding of the subject.
160. In lessons the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils are good. During the inspection pupils were enthused both by the good use of resources, and teachers kept them interested because of their sound subject knowledge as evidenced by the good explanations given. There is a lack of evidence from Key Stage 1 that sufficient emphasis is being placed on the recording of work and the development of writing skills. Teachers make good use of visits to their local church, the Cathedral and to a Mosque. These visits have a beneficial effect on the pupils' understanding. Teachers generally ask good questions that enable pupils to stay on task. Insufficient opportunities are provided for pupils, especially those higher attainers, to develop their research skills using CD-ROMs and library books. There is little evidence that individual education plans are used to guide teachers when they plan work for pupils with special educational needs and links with literacy are not sufficiently well developed. Pupils do not have the opportunity to practise various conventions of writing such as bullet points, note taking, descriptive passages and extended clauses in their recording.
161. The subject is well co-ordinated. Teachers are now following a scheme of work that incorporates the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus and guidelines provided nationally. This has provided a very good structure that ensures support and help for teachers and good coverage of the required elements. A portfolio of work has been developed that records what each year has done and a good range of resources and artefacts developed. CD-ROMs have only recently been acquired and so there is little evidence of them being used at the present time. Good use was made of the Countryside Centre to help with the Christmas Story. Pupil profiles are used to assess the progress that is being made and if consistently used these will help to develop continuity and progression in pupils' learning. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop further links with literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and has done well to establish a structure for the subject. With such a good base there is no reason why standards of attainment should not rise considerably in the future.