

# INSPECTION REPORT

**HARVILLS HAWTHORN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**WEST BROMWICH**

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 131591

Headteacher: Mr R Butcher

Reporting inspector: R E Helliwell - 5535

Dates of inspection: 12<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> March 2001

Inspection number: 230457

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wolseley Road Hill Top West Bromwich West Midlands
Postcode:	B70 0NG
Telephone number:	0121 557 1034
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs B Hocknull
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable - amalgamated school (1998)

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Subject responsibilities			Aspect responsibilities
Mr R E Helliwell 5535	Registered inspector	Science; English as an additional language; Equal opportunities.	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? How high are standards? - The school's results and pupils' achievements
Mr P Brown 9744	Lay inspector		How high are standards? - Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
Mrs M Archer	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; Geography; History.	
Mr N Hardy 29262	Team inspector	Mathematics; Information and communication technology; Physical education.	
Mrs F Ruddick 24007	Team inspector	English; Music.	
Mrs S West 22788	Team inspector	Art and design; Design and technology; Religious education; Special educational needs.	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Harvills Hawthorn is a recently amalgamated community primary school situated two miles from the centre of West Bromwich. Including 28 Nursery places, it has 424 pupils on roll: this number has fallen over recent years, before the amalgamation and since. It is much larger than most other primary schools. The school is full. Children begin, part time, in the Nursery when they are three years of age, and full time in the two Reception classes when they are four. The housing in the area is mostly low cost, a mixture of privately owned and rented accommodation. The area is recognised locally and nationally as being one which includes a high proportion of families with no employment and who live in social stress. Most children's families live within the local area; a few attend from further afield. The large majority is of British heritage. About 48 per cent of families are entitled to claim free school meals, well above the average nationally. A higher proportion than is usually found nationally speaks English as an additional language. Nine pupils have statements of special educational needs - more than the national average. Altogether, there are 120 pupils who have special educational needs. Taken as a whole, children enter the Nursery with very much lower understanding of words, numbers and social skills than is normal for their ages.

Two separate infants and juniors schools occupied the site before September 1998, when they amalgamated under one headteacher. Many problems were encountered in resolving over-staffing and the former infants school's budget difficulties, owing to falling numbers of pupils. The buildings also needed much re-planning internally to provide suitable accommodation for a newly unified staff.

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

The school is effective; in some respects it is very effective. Leadership is good and because of this pupils gain in self-esteem within a very good atmosphere. Consequently, they behave very well. From very low standards at entry, most make at least steady and some make good progress especially at Key Stage 2<sup>1</sup> where much teaching is good. Standards in National Curriculum tests are beginning to rise when compared with schools in similar contexts. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Standards in art and design are very high at the end of the juniors.
- Standards in information and communication technology, history, geography and physical education are good at the end of the juniors.
- The school has a very good atmosphere; it is harmonious and pupils behave very well. There is no racial tension and very little bullying behaviour.
- In the juniors, much teaching is good.
- Child protection procedures and provision for pupils' personal development are both very good.
- Overall, there is good leadership and a particularly effective partnership between headteacher and deputy headteacher.

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<sup>1</sup> Key Stage 1 - Infants (5-7) and Key Stage 2 - Juniors (7-11) are the two key stages in addition to the Foundation Stage (3-5).

### What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics are very low at the end of the infants, and standards in science are low.
- Standards in the juniors in English, mathematics and science are below national averages<sup>2</sup>.
- The Foundation Stage<sup>3</sup> is not established as well as could be expected owing to unclear leadership regarding this.
- The effectiveness of the senior team in relation to the infants is less than desirable, and some responsibilities are unclear to curricular co-ordinators.
- The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is not effective.

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

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

The school has not been inspected previously as a combined infants and juniors school. The separate schools were inspected in October and March 1997 respectively. Since then, there has been a very problematic amalgamation, but difficulties have been overcome and the school is now settled, happy and successful.

Since the amalgamation, parents' views of the school have strengthened. Information and communication technology has improved - better equipment is being provided and higher standards are being achieved. Standards of behaviour have improved in the infants, and high standards have been maintained in the juniors. Standards in pupils' art and design work are higher. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is now better than before, and of a good standard. Strategies to combat absenteeism have been improved. The partnership between deputy headteacher and headteacher has become particularly effective. In part, this has led to good use of time to facilitate the expansion of extra-curricular activities and off-site educational opportunities. These are much appreciated by pupils. Teaching quality has improved, particularly in English and mathematics.

### STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	N/A <sup>4</sup>	E	E	E
mathematics	N/A	E	E	D
science	N/A	E	E	D

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

<sup>2</sup> National averages refer to the percentages of pupils nationally who achieve particular levels in English, mathematics and science in National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments at ages seven and eleven.

<sup>3</sup> The Foundation Stage caters for children from the age of three to the end of the Reception Year when most are five years of age.

<sup>4</sup> N/A = not applicable, prior to the amalgamation.

From very low standards at entry, most children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. They begin the infants more knowledgeable than when they started Nursery, but standards in writing, reading and mathematics are still well below those of most other schools. Pupils make steady gains in the infants, but complete this key stage still achieving low standards when compared with national averages and with similar schools. Progress is more rapid in the juniors, and by the end of that key stage standards have improved and compare more favourably with schools in similar contexts. Nevertheless, they are still below schools nationally by the end of the juniors. Reliable data which the school has show that standards will continue to improve in 2001 and 2002 at better than average rates. Inspectors agree: pupils' work also confirms an improving picture. Standards of work seen in English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6 were somewhat better than results in National Curriculum tests in 2000. In science, pupils know substantially more than test results showed at both key stages.

In the foundation subjects<sup>5</sup>, standards of work seen are in line with what is expected in all subjects at the end of the infants. Except in design and technology, they are above those expected at the end of the juniors. In art and design, standards are very high. It was not possible to make an assessment about design and technology in the juniors as there was insufficient evidence.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: nearly all pupils are positive about school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: nearly all behave very well in class and at breaks.
Personal development and relationships	Good: most pupils co-operate and are friendly. There is no racial tension.
Attendance	It is below the national average. For about 90 per cent of pupils it is satisfactory but for the rest it is poor.

Children quickly settle into good behaviour patterns in the Nursery, and nearly all are friendly. This good foundation is built on well in the infants and juniors. The school has a very good atmosphere and is very orderly and settled.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

In the main, teaching meets the needs which pupils have: some good progress is evident at the Foundation Stage in physical development and personal and social development, and in the infants in English and mathematics. However, it is not until the juniors that gains are made against similar schools and national expectations in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects, progress is more evident and by the end of

<sup>5</sup> Foundation subjects are art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education. Religious education also is included here. English, mathematics and science are known as the core subjects.

the infants broadly satisfactory teaching has produced gains to bring standards in line with national expectations<sup>6</sup>. By the end of the juniors, most standards in the foundation subjects are above national expectations owing to good teaching. Ninety-four lessons were seen. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent: in 23 per cent it was very good or excellent: it was unsatisfactory in five lessons (about five per cent). At the Foundation Stage, teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons seen and good or better in nearly half. In the infants, in four lessons teaching was either unsatisfactory or poor (about one in every six lessons seen). In the remaining 19 lessons, it was satisfactory or better, and good or better in nine of these (38 per cent). Mostly, literacy and numeracy skills are taught satisfactorily; but often better than this in the juniors, especially in Years 5 and 6. Teaching is strongest on the whole in the juniors, with information and communication technology, art and design, music and physical education being the best taught subjects. Teaching in science is the weakest of the core subjects, although on the whole it is satisfactory at both key stages. Teaching in geography was the least satisfactory subject taught. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen in one lesson of physical education in the juniors, and in two lessons of English and in one lesson of geography in the infants. In one lesson of science in the infants, teaching quality was poor. All teachers make good relationships with pupils and treat them respectfully but with high expectations for their good behaviour. Consequently, pupils take good advantage of the learning opportunities they are offered.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: it is supplemented by a very good range of extra-curricular activities and off-site educational opportunities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Poor: little is known about pupils with English as an additional language and so their needs remain obscure: provision for them is very unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good on the whole: pupils gain very much in self-esteem and the atmosphere in school is positive.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Children are well cared for. There is a strong pastoral system, well led by the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

The curriculum is very well enhanced by off-site education, school visits and residential courses. Child protection procedures are very good. There is very little bullying and that which occurs is dealt with well. Most parents' views of the school are very strong and the partnership with them is good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other	Good: the partnership between headteacher and deputy headteacher is very effective. However, a few aspects of curricular leadership are unclear. Leadership of the Foundation Stage and some aspects in the infants lack enough

<sup>6</sup> National expectations (the expected standards) are set down in the National Curriculum as levels which the average child is expected to achieve by a particular age.

key staff	direction and clarity of purpose.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their statutory duties and have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their visits to school are not systematic, well discussed or adequately recorded.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The evaluation by headteacher, deputy headteacher, governors and senior teacher has good features. Data in English and mathematics are used well to identify what needs to be done. In some subjects, evaluation of standards is not fully effective.
The strategic use of resources	The use of financial resources is good. Grants to supplement resources have been sought and used well.

There are more than adequate numbers of class teachers, accommodation and classroom assistants. Teaching resources are adequate on the whole. Governors and headteacher seek value for money when making spending decisions.

### **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>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Children make good progress.</li> <li>• Pupils behave well.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable in approaching the school.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard.</li> </ul>	There is negligible comment from parents about desirable improvements.

Only four parents attended the pre-inspection meeting with the registered inspector, and just over 15 per cent returned the questionnaires. All other parents questioned voiced support for the school. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments show that standards achieved by most pupils are very low at the end of the infants and well below national averages at the end of the juniors. However, after a now successful amalgamation, standards are beginning to rise. Only two years' data are available, so reliable trends are not available at the moment. However, there has been some decline in standards overall between 1999 and 2000 at the end of the infants. Between 1999 and 2000, standards in tests in both reading and writing show decline. In mathematics they show an increase, but results since 1999 place the school in the bottom five per cent when compared with all schools nationally.

2. By the end of the juniors, there is some improvement in all national tests, but standards remained low and well below national averages in English, mathematics and science in 2000 and low in comparison to similar schools. Work in class is somewhat better than tests at both key stages, except in science where the extent of what pupils know tends to be much better than tests show and close to the standards expected. Work in Years 5 and 6 indicates higher standards in 2001 than the test results in the core subjects in 2000. Many more pupils are on course to reach the standards expected in 2002 and 2001 respectively. This is confirmed by data which are externally analysed using a national reference system. They show that pupils in Year 6 are on course to achieve higher average scores in 2001 than their predecessors in 2000, and that those in Year 5 are on course to attain even higher average scores. This rise in standards will move the school nearer to both national averages and the attainments of pupils in schools in similar social contexts. It is on course to meet its targets which are reasonably challenging for 2001 and 2002.

3. Taken as a whole, standards are very low on entry. Most children have not acquired the normal range of social, literacy and numeracy skills at entry to the Nursery. They achieve particularly well in improving their social skills, and acquire more understanding in all aspects by the end of the Foundation Stage. However, they begin the National Curriculum with low standards in most aspects except social and physical skills, and by the end of the infants most are still behind in English, mathematics and science. Most pupils do better in the juniors and make good progress to improve their attainments in English, mathematics and science to be less far behind. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in meeting their educational targets. In the foundation subjects, progress is much better. Most pupils make steady progress across the infants and achieve well in the juniors. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language is impossible to assess because no suitable records exist. There is little difference between the progress of boys and girls. In some lessons, higher attainers make only moderate progress when they are insufficiently challenged.

4. The low standards in reading and writing are mirrored in pupils' responses. In the infants, most are reading only simple texts and lack fluency and grasp of meaning. Most write in short sentences or simple phrases. In mathematics, most have too little grasp of larger numbers and their mental work is slow. In science, they discuss the events they see, but do not explain them well. Work in other subjects is much closer to expected standards. In art and design, most pupils paint and draw with reasonable control and use their own ideas. In design and technology, they construct simple models and artefacts for particular purposes. They know things about the past, for example in comparing their lives, and study the local area such as where churches and other buildings are located. In music, most sing in pitch and keep to the correct beat. In information and communication technology, most know how to operate computers and to undertake simple word processing. In physical education, most move expressively to music and repeat physical manoeuvres with expected levels of control. In religious education, they know something about Christianity and some other world faiths.

5. By the end of the juniors, most of these satisfactory standards have improved to reach better than expected levels and some even higher standards. Most pupils grow in confidence in speaking and by Year 6 join in well in discussions. Some read well but others are still hesitant and find difficulty with challenging texts. In writing, many produce interesting and well informed accounts and draft work effectively. In mathematics, most learn the appropriate vocabulary but are given too little time to develop a variety of strategies for solving problems. In science, pupils acquire some knowledge of such aspects as plants and body systems but do not often apply this knowledge well to make predictions or explain their findings. In art and design, very many pupils control paint well to select very suitable colours and use other artists' examples well to influence their own work. Standards are very high. In design and technology, there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards overall and at the end of the key stage. In information and communication technology, most understand well such matters as 'e-mailing' and search the 'Internet' for information. Standards are mostly good. Similar good standards are achieved in history and geography. Here, most pupils are able to make comparisons between climates in geography and place events in chronological order in history. Also, standards in physical education are better than expected: many pupils have good control of physical movements and some have excellent skills in aspects such as gymnastic exercises. In religious education and music most pupils reach the standards expected. In music, most sing in different styles and take different parts in the same song. In religious education, most know about aspects of different religions, including Christianity.

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

6. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They obviously enjoy the whole school experience and are highly motivated to learn and develop as individuals. Their self-esteem and confidence steadily improve as they move through the age groups: the wide range of activities available to them facilitates their increasing confidence. The very high regard pupils have for the school has been confirmed recently by an independent survey conducted by Exeter University in which it was shown that 95 per cent of pupils in Years 5 and 6 expressed positive attitudes with 70 per cent expressing a very positive attitude.

7. Relationships with staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are very good and provide many pupils with a firm basis of security from which learning can take root. Pupils show respect and courtesy to their teachers and communicate with them confidently. They make good progress in terms of social development, particularly because of the good relationships established between them, teachers and assistants, and the careful watch kept on their personal development.

8. Between pupils, relationships are also very good. They work and play together collaboratively and are very sensitive to each other's needs and limitations. For example, in a physical education class substantial and effective help and encouragement were given by pupils to a lower attaining member of their group. Also, comfort and sympathy was offered to a pupil suffering a minor fall. In the playground, pupils show high levels of social skills, evidently enjoying each other's company and the chance to share common interests. During the inspection, no incidents of oppressive behaviour were observed, such as bullying, sexism or racism. Pupils are aware of the effect of their actions on other people: they make successful efforts not to be hurtful to those whose values and beliefs may be different from their own. Pupils' personal development is very good. From very low personal skills at entry, nearly all pupils have good skills by the time they leave the Reception Year. Their personal development continues to improve across both key stages. Pupils accept increasing levels of responsibility well and make particular gains in their self-esteem through such activities as gymnastics and music.

9. On the whole, behaviour is very good. Teachers operate a positive behaviour management strategy based on recognition of effort, achievement and rewards. This is consistently applied throughout all age groups and any necessary sanctions are imposed within this clear framework. Four boys were excluded for fixed terms during the last twelve months. Pupils' behaviour in the playground, although occasionally boisterous, is non-aggressive and unthreatening. A particular strength is the excellent behaviour of pupils on external visits. This was observed during inspection on an excursion to the local Methodist Church when pupils behaved in an exemplary manner. Also, the excellent behaviour of pupils on school visits has been acknowledged by a number

of outside agencies in formal letters of congratulation. Pupils' very good behaviour makes a positive contribution to their academic progress and achievement.

10. Attendance is above the 90 per cent threshold, but below the national average for primary schools. For about 90 per cent of pupils it is satisfactory, but for a regular 10 per cent it is poor. The minority of poor attenders attains lower academic standards than those whose attendance is satisfactory or better. This relationship has been identified by the school itself and so it is taking suitable measures to improve matters.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

11. Teaching in the school as a whole is good. It is mostly satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and infants, and often good or better in the juniors, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Ninety-four lessons were seen during the inspection. Teaching in 95 per cent of them was satisfactory or better. In nearly a half, it was good or better. Twenty-two per cent of teaching was very good or outstanding. No teaching was unsatisfactory at the Foundation Stage: just over 60 per cent was satisfactory, just under 40 per cent was good or very good. In the infants, in one in every six lessons seen (17 per cent), teaching was unsatisfactory or poor but, on the other hand, in two in every five (38 per cent) it was good or better. In the juniors, teaching was satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of lessons and unsatisfactory in two per cent - in one lesson of physical education. The strongest teaching in the infants is in information and communication technology and in art and design. In these subjects, teaching in the juniors is strong as well as in English, mathematics, music and physical education. Teaching in science was the weakest of the core subjects, but it was satisfactory on the whole. Teaching in literacy and numeracy was broadly satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and infants, and often good in the juniors. However, there is some inefficiency in use of time. Almost all pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. However, early in the infants a pupil with a statement does not receive sufficient specialist support and, consequently, excessive demands are made on the class teacher. Nearly all pupils with special educational needs work hard and make good use of their group or withdrawal sessions, listening with increasing concentration and trying to make worthwhile contributions to discussion. At the end of the juniors, they take great pride in the presentation of their work and are pleased to receive justifiable praise from their teachers.

12. Good or very good teaching occurred in 16 lessons at inspection: one in every 18 lessons in the Foundation Stage, one in every 12 in the infants and one in every three in the juniors. A small proportion of teaching was excellent. The very good teaching is notable for the teachers' good subject knowledge which enables them to offer rich and interesting instruction. Coupled with this, they are able to probe pupils with searching questions. In addition, such teaching offers a broad range of ways to learn, including regular use of good quality models and artefacts, charts and computer programs. Thus, all pupils have many opportunities to check what they know and to understand more. Also, the teaching shows high expectations of pupils and challenges the higher attainers to learn whilst providing many chances for others to revise and re-learn. A good example was a lesson in science in Year 5. In studying the body, its organs and systems, pupils were first told the teacher's aims. The teacher had set up a very good display of models such as a skeleton and a three-dimensional human body. She related much of her teaching to her pupils' own bodies, and showed how pulse rates change by getting the pupils to exercise and test. She carefully balanced times of instruction with pupils' activities where they tried for themselves. Good use was made of a computer program to illustrate her teaching about how and why the heart acts as a pump. She gave extra support to pupils with special educational needs to help them catch up with some of their higher attaining friends. As a result of this very good quality teaching, pupils learned more and more about their bodies and how they work. Because the work was interesting and they were finding out more, nearly all pupils stuck very well to their tasks and enjoyed their work; sometimes they were surprised about what they found out.

13. All teaching shows good relationships with pupils, who are suitably rewarded for effort and attainment and properly re-directed if standards fall. This good management results in nearly all pupils behaving very well; very little poor behaviour occurs and any which does is nearly always dealt with effectively. Nearly all lessons are at least planned soundly and this too helps pupils to pay attention because lessons usually flow well. Equally, all lessons are at least soundly prepared with the necessary equipment, books and worksheets suitably to hand, and so there is very little time lost whilst pupils wait for the next part of the lesson, or for the equipment they need. Most teachers keep individual notes of pupils' work and use assessment in English and mathematics well to inform their planning. Most work is dated and marked. However, assessment information is not used effectively in science to plan, or in many foundation subjects to judge pupils' progress. Most teachers set homework and, where teaching is good, often set well judged tasks. In Year 1, there are some good quality homework packs available for use by parents to assist learning in science.

14. In close to half of all lessons in all key stages, teaching is satisfactory. Strengths outweighed weaknesses. There is a variety of reasons for teaching not being judged good or better, and these are not the same in each lesson. Sometimes, activities are not so well matched to pupils' prior attainment, so on occasions either higher attainers are not challenged, or lower attainers are not sufficiently helped. This slows their progress during those parts of lessons where this happens. In some lessons, there is too much reliance on question and answer as the main teaching style. This limits pupils' opportunities to remain involved. In some lessons, opportunities are lost to involve all pupils in responding to questions and challenges. This is in contrast to good or very good teaching where teachers employ such devices as everyone quickly writing the answer down, or pairs are asked to discuss for a minute and then come up with a response. In some lessons, not enough opportunities for higher attainers are given - perhaps they are asked to do all the easy questions first for an exercise which reduces the amount of time they work at their own level when, eventually, they come on to the more difficult questions.

15. Overall, only in five lessons was teaching of unsatisfactory quality or worse, but four of these occurred in the infants - in about one in six of the lessons seen. In one lesson of physical education, teaching was unsatisfactory in the juniors - one out of every 50 lessons. In those lessons, work was set at too hard or too easy a level for most pupils; teachers had a poor grasp of the subject they were teaching and, particularly in science, too much time was wasted revising what pupils already knew; activities were uninteresting or took far too much time - such as walking around corridors without concentrating on what was taking place; teaching relied too much on one particular activity which was not of sufficient quality to keep pupils' interest or provide new information; and sometimes teaching relied too much on one strategy - usually question and answer - as the means of instruction, consequently, too few pupils were stimulated to seek answers.

16. Teaching and support for pupils with English as an additional language is poor. Such pupils are not properly identified or their needs assessed. Consequently, it is impossible for teachers to judge the progress they make or their level of English acquisition.

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

17. The school provides a curriculum which covers all the necessary aspects, including religious education, and it is balanced in favour of literacy - which matches pupils' needs. Although adequate, the Foundation Stage curriculum does not presently successfully incorporate Nursery and Reception classes as encouraged in governmental guidance. Particularly in the juniors, the curriculum is broadened by other opportunities. For example, there is a wide range of extra-curricular activities which complements effectively school-based learning. Numerous after-school clubs have been set up, which provide opportunities in a wide range of activities, including music and sport. The clubs are well organised and run by volunteer teachers: they are well attended and make a very positive contribution to pupils' personal and academic development and their positive attitudes towards school. Learning is also well supported by visits to local places of interest linked to the curriculum: for example, history teaching is reinforced by school visits to the site of the Battle of Bosworth Fields. The school is successful in maximising pupils' involvement in external visits, including residential, by ensuring that parents are given extended periods of time to pay any necessary charges. They are also given advice about eligibility for any reductions. As a result, all pupils are included.

18. The school is not yet totally inclusive in terms of access and opportunities. Although facilities for those with physical difficulties are very good, procedures for meeting the needs of pupils with English as a second language are unsatisfactory: pupils within this category have not been properly identified and recorded. In a few lessons, higher attainers are not sufficiently challenged. On some occasions, when pupils are withdrawn from major parts of core subjects such as science, to attend other classes, their opportunity in science is reduced. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are becoming effective: they are responsible for the evident increase in skills at the end of the juniors reported earlier.

19. Provision in the school for personal, social and health education is good. A suitably detailed policy is being implemented which clearly details how these aspects, including citizenship, should be integrated into different subject areas. A teacher is responsible for co-ordinating this aspect and for monitoring how effectively it is taught across both infants and juniors. Some good examples of personal, social and health education were observed during the inspection, including health and safety in a physical education lesson and citizenship in an assembly. Adequate provision is made through the science curriculum for the teaching of sex education in line with the governors' decision to include it.

20. Responsibility for the co-ordination of external education is delegated to a member of staff who researches residential learning facilities and evaluates their effectiveness when used by the school. Productive links have been forged with the local community: these have enhanced both the academic and social development of pupils. Good quality relationships have been established with local churches whose ministers provide valuable assistance with school assemblies. Ministers make their own churches available for teaching purposes. A recent example was the 'mock wedding' which involved Year 3 pupils enacting a Christian wedding service in the local Methodist Church. This was part of their studies in religious education. Also, links have been established with local commerce, largely through the Sandwell Education and Business Partnership. Through this agency, fruitful relationships have been created with a wide range of commercial organisations whose resources have been fully and effectively utilised to promote pupils' very good social development. The school is committed to local environmental improvement initiatives and has been awarded a 'Pioneer Charter' in recognition. For example, during the inspection a lesson in science was related to the practical use of plants and grasses to attract wildlife to an area on the school site. The school uses the Sandwell Skills Award Progress Log which provides gold, silver and bronze awards for pupils attaining specific standards in their personal development. They must achieve the related targets as a result of their practical involvement in community-linked projects. Also, outdoor furniture from a design and technology project has contributed to environmental improvement.

21. Excellent relationships have been established with partner institutions which greatly enhance the range of educational opportunity to pupils. For example, the science laboratory facilities of a local comprehensive school are used on a regular basis by Year 6 pupils.

22. Provision for personal development is very good. Pupils show appreciation of moral values which are systematically promoted through classroom teaching and, most particularly, in assemblies. Around the school, nearly all pupils show good manners, are courteous, tolerate others and are respectful. These values are promoted by nearly all staff and their good examples are followed.

23. Provision for spiritual development is very good. It is promoted not only through religious education classes and assemblies, but also through other lessons when appropriate opportunities arise. For example, in a science lesson in Year 2 pupils were deeply interested and greatly surprised when a bulb lit up as they had been led to expect. There were many other examples. These strongly contribute to the positive atmosphere in school. In an assembly to celebrate pupils' achievements, very many pupils were in awe at their friends' standards in gymnastics and music.

24. The provision for cultural awareness is good. Pupils are made clearly aware of cultural aspects, and this learning often is appropriately illustrated by relevant artefacts. These are sometimes brought into school by the pupils themselves or often borrowed from a local multi-cultural centre. People within the community are called upon to promote different qualities of heritage: they come in to school to talk to pupils about different cultural heritages and traditions. All this adds up to a well promoted aspect.

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

25. The school cares for its pupils very well. A detailed health and safety policy has been prepared which sets out clearly areas of responsibility and procedures. Fire prevention and control procedures have been properly established, and are monitored through the school's health and safety committee and local authority safety adviser. There are regular visits to undertake assessments. Usefully, the policy identifies a wide range of common hazards in the school, and reference to some of these, for example blocked fire doors, is made within the framework of classroom teaching. Particular care is taken with the indoor swimming pool which presents a number of potential hazards. Regular chlorine level checks are made by the site manager, and the swimming pool area is secure and not at risk of informal use. The school is particularly thorough in conducting risk assessments prior to non-routine activities such as external visits. On the recent excursion to the local Methodist Church, where children walked the whole journey, road safety hazards had been identified prior to outset and suitable control measures operated throughout.

26. Child protection procedures and practices are of very good quality. A member of staff has delegated responsibility and has received appropriate training. She is fully conversant with school procedures and how these interrelate with those of the external agencies such as social services. All members of staff have been trained in the procedures and also in recognition of signs associated with children at risk. Specific briefing is given to teachers newly appointed to the school.

27. Monitoring pupils' academic progress is not wholly satisfactory. Although good in English and mathematics, and satisfactory in science through end of year assessments in Years 2, 5 and 6, assessment in other subjects, except information and communication technology, is unsatisfactory. In the main, pupils' work is not well monitored to provide good quality guidance to teachers about strengths and weaknesses in achieving age-related curricular targets. In reading, writing, English and mathematics, there are data to hand which are well analysed and good use is made of them. For example, the school understands that pupils' writing merits improvement. However, without a corresponding analysis of pupils' work, it is impossible to know which curricular targets to plan in depth and concentrate on. Many teachers keep individual pupils' records in self-designed tests, and some use them well to target groups - others do not.

28. Provision for children with special educational needs is good and teachers and support staff are effective in ensuring full access to the curriculum for this group. Their education is supported with a whole school approach. Pupils are taught mainly within mainstream classes but have withdrawal groups for numeracy and literacy. Individual educational plans are pertinent and detailed and drawn up by the co-ordinator after she has assessed pupils' needs. All staff know that these can be discussed and targets altered should the need arise. Pupils are aware of their individual targets and strive to meet them. The provision for special educational needs has improved since amalgamation. Procedures for identifying pupils with English as an additional language are poor. Such children are not properly monitored to ensure their progress is similar to other groups.

29. Procedures for the monitoring and promotion of attendance are very good. They have been strengthened since the amalgamation. A weekly computerised analysis of absence is produced and used to identify persistent absentees. Pupils whose attendance falls below 85 per cent are targeted, using the offices of the education welfare service who make home visits and, if necessary, follow up in writing. This policy is consolidated by a one-day sweep of attendance each term to identify non-notified absence and by involvement in a joint local education welfare service and police initiative to stop and question children discovered in public places during normal school hours. Pupils whose attendance is consistently good are recognised by special mentions in assemblies.

30. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are excellent. Rules are limited to those necessary, clearly defined and communicated effectively to pupils. Many classes have a good behaviour code posted on the wall which is clearly stated and fully understood by pupils. The strategy for promoting good behaviour is very much based on positive reward and acknowledgement operating both informally in the classroom and more formally during assemblies. The school is very successful in combating bullying and other forms of oppressive behaviour.

A clearly defined policy has been drafted and, as with all other elements of behaviour management, procedures are fully understood by teachers and consistently implemented. Pupils know these procedures and are confident of their fairness and effectiveness.

31. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. This is in part owing to the good lead provided by the deputy headteacher. The specific needs of individual pupils are identified and, where appropriate, these are communicated to the pupils themselves. The school has established very effective relationships with external agencies: these are used to the full to promote personal development.

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

32. Very many parents' views are strongly positive and they are satisfied with what the school provides and achieves. They find teachers readily approachable, communication good, and strongly believe that the school provides a settled environment within which their children develop both academically and socially. The returned questionnaires had very minimal comment regarding any concerns. Other parents, questioned informally during the inspection, voiced strong support for the school. It has successfully established a range of ways to link with parents, particularly through regular parents' evenings and informal meetings which take place immediately prior to school and immediately afterwards. Teachers have a very good understanding and knowledge of children for whom they are responsible and communicate clearly with their parents and carers.

33. Only a small proportion of parents become actively involved in school activities, but the impact on pupils' learning and development is positive. However, fewer parents than is usual hear their children read at home regularly, and some believe homework is an imposition. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and home varies, but for a substantial proportion of pupils it is less than adequate. Where pupils are assisted at home, for instance with reading, pupils make quicker and more sustained progress. Some parents offer assistance with school visits and fund-raising. This eases the effort needed to sustain the wide range of visits and provides much appreciated assistance with finance for the outings. Thus, all pupils gain.

34. The quality of written information provided is satisfactory. The school brochure is well presented, although lacking somewhat in visual impact: it provides comprehensive information regarding school procedures and the curriculum. Periodic newsletters provide new information and are also used to publicise regular attendance. The governing body's annual report to parents is generally comprehensive in scope and mostly meets statutory requirements. However, it does not contain the necessary detail about attendance, security and the suitability of the building for pupils with physical difficulties.

35. Annual, written reports to parents and carers are satisfactory and give adequate feedback about pupils' academic and social development. An opportunity to discuss reports is offered. Most are written in a reader friendly style, and in the juniors provide specific information on each subject of the curriculum. However, some do not contain the detail necessary for parents to know clearly about desirable improvements in their children's work. Nearly all parents have signed the home school agreement.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

36. On the whole, the school is well led and managed with many more strengths than weaknesses. The partnership between headteacher and deputy works very well, and draws successfully on each contributor's strengths. The partnership organises time well to provide much needed discussions about personal issues with pupils on a regular basis. The result is that pupils' personal development is very good: nearly all gain in social confidence and self-esteem through the impact of the partnership working with consistency. Good use is made of the time which accrues as a result of shared teaching arrangements to seek grants, make off-site curricular links and put energy into supporting community initiatives. Good use is made of strategic resources and time set aside to find ways to supplement the basic school budget. Similarly, a high frequency of monitoring of teaching quality is produced by the partnership and has been particularly beneficial in raising teaching quality in English and mathematics. More than a hundred observations have taken place since 1999, with clear criteria and feedback to teachers given in written and oral forms, with strengths stated and points for improvement clearly pointed out. Leadership and management are supported well by administrative staff who are welcoming and efficient.

37. Governors know most of the school's strengths and weaknesses well and fulfil their statutory duties. Performance targets for the headteacher are a very good match to the school's current needs. Governors' minutes show that they keep a close watch on the budget which the headteacher plans and administers efficiently. All spoken with were aware of and apply the principles of seeking best value. Grants are used for the purposes intended and community links have provided very good value related to extra-curricular and off-site educational activities. This broad range helps very many pupils to be positive about school. Data from English and mathematics tests are well used to evaluate the school's performance. For example, the need to improve pupils' writing is well discerned. Recently, governors have become more involved in establishing the school development plan. This is drawn together from a number of sources which include the senior management team and curricular co-ordinators. It gives a very clear picture of the school's plans, but is not so clear about recording the priorities, and in some parts its success criteria are insufficiently precise to be measured easily. Too often are the criteria related to providing something rather than to what is expected will happen as a result of that provision. However, the plan's targets are appropriate and focused on the school's needs.

38. The senior management team meets regularly to discuss the plan's progress. However, rôles are not clearly defined or investigated sufficiently in terms of productivity. This has resulted in the senior team's rôle in relation to the infants being very much less value for money than the one related to the juniors. Also, there is some lack of clarity with regard to leadership of the Foundation Stage and in some aspects of curricular leadership. Consequently, although some curricular leaders are very effective - in mathematics, design and technology, music and special educational needs - others are only broadly effective. The realisation that a subject management rôle is to do with raising standards and measuring outcomes is not sufficiently well understood. Therefore, assessment of pupils' work is often lacking: for example, in English, science, art and design, design and technology, geography, history and religious education. The loss of direction in the Foundation Stage is the greatest; the school is well behind most schools nationally in establishing the Foundation Stage from September 2000. Leadership of the infant phase does not focus sufficiently on raising standards, directing curricular design, improving teaching or monitoring pupils' work. It is successful in supporting teachers' personal development and pupils' good behaviour. Leadership in relation to pupils with English as an additional language is poor. No-one is sure of how many such children there are or what stage they are at in the acquisition of English. They receive no extra support.

39. The management of special educational needs is very good. The register is kept properly. The co-ordinator, teachers and learning support assistants work well as a team. Pupils' progress is regularly assessed and this enables some to move back into mainstream work so others may benefit from small group teaching. There is a very good working relationship with local authority support staff. The special educational needs additional teacher and speech therapists meet pupils every week. The educational psychologist visits regularly to support pupils with behavioural problems and to assess reading progress across Years 2 and 3. At the end of

Year 6, pupils' work is marked well, their self-esteem is raised and they know they are an integral part of the school community.

40. Curricular design is somewhat inefficient. For example, time spans of one hour and fifteen minutes are not used well on many occasions if they are set aside for the literacy hour. Other lesson times, for mathematics for example, tend to be longer than nationally recommended and when they go past the recommended 45 minutes the pace sometimes drops, particularly in the infants.

41. There is more than an adequate number of teachers whose combined qualifications and experience provide good coverage of the curriculum. Accommodation is sufficient, and good use is made also of prefabricated classrooms to increase flexibility of use. Because of the amalgamation, the building has undergone some modifications, in particular to re-site the entrance centrally to the previously separate schools, and to provide staff facilities large and central enough for an expanded staff. The building is extensive with long corridors and extreme parts, but the use of space is managed well to minimise long walks. The site is well looked after. Its presentation is good and, particularly inside, is kept attractive by the site manager and cleaning team. Recently, a suite of linked computers has raised the amount and quality of provision for teaching information and communication technology to good levels. Most other subjects are adequately resourced. Science resources are not adequate but, presently, are being supplemented and reorganised to fit the newly adopted scheme. Resources are also inadequate in history, geography and music.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

42. In order to improve further, headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) improve standards and rates of progress for pupils at the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 by:
  - improving overall the quality of teaching to become closer to the best; (Paras 11, 14, 15, 48, 60)
  - in literacy and numeracy, increasing efficiency of the lesson structures to ensure no time is wasted; (Paras. 11, 49, 60, 61, 67)
  - improving teachers' questioning techniques so that they promote pupils' speaking and listening skills more effectively; (Paras. 49, 52)
  - increasing the quality and frequency of teachers' challenges to pupils in some lessons; (Paras. 14, 15, 60, 78)
  - increasing the quality of instruction in some lessons; (Paras. 14, 15, 60, 78)
  
- (2) continue to increase rates of progress at Key Stage 2 by:
  - establishing a consistent pattern in teaching the literacy hour which contains all the necessary elements; (Paras. 14, 61)
  - increasing the quality and frequency of teachers' challenges to pupils in some lessons; (Paras. 14, 15, 60, 106)
  - in science, ensuring teaching quality more consistently matches the best, and that scientific enquiry is taught progressively; (Paras. 11, 73, 74, 77)
  - in some lessons, improving the degree of challenge for higher attainers; (Paras. 3, 14, 18, 65)
  
- (3) establish the Foundation Stage properly by:
  - designing an appropriate curriculum which matches national requirements for pupils up to five years of age; (Paras. 17, 46, 47, 51, 52, 53)
  - improving the leadership for Nursery and the Reception classes; (Para. 38)
  - establishing consistency of appropriate procedures in the early years - up to the end of Reception Year; (Paras. 43, 46, 47, 52)
  
- (4) improve some aspects of curricular leadership by:
  - providing more clarity and raising expectations for subject leaders; (Para. 80)
  - redesigning timetables to increase their efficiency; (Para. 40)
  - implementing a more systematic programme of visits undertaken by governors to gain first-hand experience of school; (Para. 37)
  - increasing effectiveness and efficiency of some aspects of senior management at Key Stage 1; (Para. 38)
  - improving assessment in science and many foundation subjects; (Paras. 27, 80, 84, 87, 91, 94, 104, 108, 112)
  
- (5) improve the provision for pupils with English as an additional language by:
  - identifying all such pupils properly and ascertaining which language they use at home; (Para. 28)
  - assessing their level of English acquisition, analysing their language needs and, if necessary, finding extra support for pupils with need; (Paras. 3, 16, 38, 89, 93)
  - improving leadership in this area and promoting teachers' knowledge and understanding of such pupils. (Paras. 28, 38)

Minor issues:

- ensure all the requirements are met in issuing the annual report to parents by:
  - completing details of attendance, particularly absence;
  - stating how the school's security has been reviewed and is sound;

- stating how access for pupils with physical difficulties is arranged.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	94
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	53

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6%	17%	27%	45%	4%	1%	0%

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Nursery	Y1 - Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	28	396
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	190

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	Y1 - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	119

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	25

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	36
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	9.0
National comparative data	5.2

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.1
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(99)	25 (28)	23 (30)	48 (58)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12 (15)	12 (19)	15 (15)
	Girls	15 (22)	16 (24)	15 (22)
	Total	27 (37)	28 (43)	30 (37)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	56 (64)	58 (74)	63 (64)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12 (15)	12 (15)	11 (15)
	Girls	16 (21)	17 (21)	17 (24)
	Total	28 (36)	29 (36)	28 (39)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	58 (62)	60 (62)	58 (67)
	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 (99)	29 (39)	25 (35)	54 (64)

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12 (18)	13 (14)	17 (23)
	Girls	16 (14)	14 (15)	17 (15)
	Total	28 (32)	27 (29)	34 (38)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	52 (50)	50 (45)	63 (59)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14 (20)	12 (15)	16 (25)
	Girls	15 (15)	12 (15)	18 (14)
	Total	29 (35)	24 (30)	34 (39)
Percentage of pupils	School	54 (55)	44 (47)	63 (61)

at NC level 4 or above	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)
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*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.*

***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	8
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	15
Indian	49
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	0
White	370
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

***Teachers and classes***

**Qualified teachers and classes: Y1– Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	19.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.2
Average class size	26.4

**Education support staff: Y1 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	67

**Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	55
Number of pupils per FTE adult	9.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	4	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	(forecast)	00 - 01
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	£
Total income	942,911
Total expenditure	931,569
Expenditure per pupil	2,197
Balance brought forward from previous year	5,711
Balance carried forward to next year	17,053

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	460
Number of questionnaires returned	69

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	23	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	29	1	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	49	46	3	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	46	4	3	6
The teaching is good.	65	32	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	49	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	38	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	32	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	38	59	1	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	49	47	3	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	54	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	43	3	4	13

**Additional comments**

Only three parents provided written comment. Two were very positive and one expressed some concern at receiving too little homework since Year 5. In addition to those attending the meeting, other parents asked voiced support for the school. Since the amalgamation, parental satisfaction has increased. Inspectors agree with parents that the school is now successful and is improving. On the whole, there is sufficient homework for pupils of these ages.



## **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**

43. Children enter the Nursery at the beginning of the year in which they are four, unless there are places when they may be admitted earlier. The Nursery has accommodation for 30 children in each of two sessions and they attend on a part-time basis, either morning or afternoon. The Nursery is well staffed with a teacher and two nursery nurses. From the Nursery, children move into one of two Reception classes of about 25 where the staffing ratio is less favourable. In one class, a nursery nurse works to support a child with particular needs and the senior teacher works in the Reception classes during literacy and numeracy sessions every morning. However, there is no full-time teaching assistance for these classes and the children/adult ratio is less favourable than in many other schools and by comparison with the Nursery class here.

44. Members of staff work hard and successfully to build positive relationships with parents and children. In the term before starting Nursery, they visit each child at home and invite parents and children to visit school. They hold meetings to explain school policies, to show what children are taught and how, and the ways in which they can best be helped at home. They lend books and mathematical activities. These induction arrangements contribute positively to good relationships and attitudes.

45. Children are admitted to the Nursery on a staggered basis to enable them to settle, and for the Sandwell baseline assessments to be carried out. These reveal that for most children attainment on entry is very low across most areas of learning, particularly in the areas of personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. On the whole, children make steady and some good progress in the Nursery, although their attainment on entry to the Reception classes is still low. At this time, as measured by a performance in primary schools test, most children's attainment is below average and a substantial number is identified as needing extra support.

46. Despite the Foundation Stage becoming a requirement from September 2000, the school has not yet begun to develop an appropriate organisation or curriculum to incorporate the current Nursery and Reception classes. This is partly owing to unclear local guidance and partly to a lack of direction for a person in school to shoulder the responsibility. Therefore, the Nursery and Reception classes still operate independently. Reception children receive a curriculum based on National Curriculum targets and strategies rather than on the Early Learning Goals to which they became entitled in September 2000. They are therefore denied some of the important experiences and learning resources that they should have.

47. Eighteen lessons were seen at inspection. In ten, teaching was satisfactory, in seven good and in one it was very good. Nursery curricular planning is suitably detailed and very good assessments are made of children's attainment through observation of, and discussion with, them. Members of staff know their children very well. While Reception planning is thorough, there is little evidence to show that assessment is used to identify points for future curricular planning. In neither group does the curriculum ensure that children have sufficient experiences across all areas of learning as specified in the Early Learning Goals. Across the key stage, teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers have good relationships with the children and deal with them sympathetically and kindly. As a result, nearly all behave very well.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

48. Most children make good progress and attain a good standard in their personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Reception Year. This helps to set a purposeful atmosphere for learning and the steady progress made over the key stage. Children enjoy school and have very good relationships with their teachers, the nursery nurses, other staff and each other. They are friendly, nearly always well behaved and clearly know right from wrong. The learning environment is always calm. Most children concentrate well, work

hard and take a pride in their achievements. They learn to take turns, are supportive of one another and recognise each other's good work. A good example is the 'daily snack' time in the Nursery. Here, children sit

in family groups, learn to help others, wait until everyone is served and say thank you. Teaching is sometimes good and otherwise satisfactory. In both year groups - Nursery and Reception - the timetable is broken up into finite 'periods' and so children do not have enough opportunity to select their own activities, to solve problems, or to work independently for sustained periods of time. The range of activities available is therefore somewhat narrow and does not sufficiently cover all aspects.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

49. From very low standards on entry, most children make steady progress but only a few have attained national expectations by the end of Reception. Children's oral skills are very low. On entry to the Nursery, many communicate by facial expression or by gesture: their speech is indistinct. Children across the key stage listen to their teachers and to each other well, but opportunities to speak in structured situations are few. Too often, teachers talk for children at the end of lessons when they are showing what they have been doing. Often, they do not join in with them in the rôle-play corner, in construction activities, or in the outside area, with the purpose of improving their oral skills. In class, children are not often given the chance to listen to stories or songs on tape, although they join in with rhymes and songs with their teachers. Although there is no established book corner in either Nursery or Reception, Nursery children clearly enjoy the 'DEAR' (drop everything and read) sessions which take place every day. They concentrate well, share books with peers or adults and discuss pictures enthusiastically. Nearly all children enjoy listening to stories, are attentive, and older ones answer questions confidently. By the end of the Foundation Stage, a few children read simple texts and the majority recognises single sounds. Some can match rhyming words. They are beginning to know about authors and illustrators, but none can name a favourite story. On entry to the Nursery, most children's writing is very immature, but by the time they go into the Reception classes some can write and recognise their own name. Older children follow the literacy hour and some are beginning to write simple texts. In neither Reception class is provision made for children to practise writing as a self-chosen activity in a designated area. The teaching is mostly satisfactory.

### **Mathematical development**

50. Attainment in mathematics is very low on entry and, although some children catch up a little, it is still low at the end of the key stage. Younger children register their attendance by putting a personal card in a box, and share in counting how many are present in each 'family' group. Some can show the correct number of fingers for each number, some in more than one way. Children learn about plane shapes and some are able with adult support to recognise and continue a simple sequence. They use simple language for position and time. The progress of Reception children is mostly satisfactory and they make steady progress through the early stages of the National Numeracy Strategy. They count to 20 and back in ones and twos with some help, and can do simple calculations to ten. They use comparative terms such as 'longer than' or 'bigger than' correctly, and recognise coins and do calculations to 10p, giving change. They know 'yesterday', 'tomorrow' and other terms to denote the passing of time. Nursery children use playdough to make and cut shapes, and the use of construction apparatus reinforces their understanding of size and measurement. Older children are well motivated. They enjoy their mathematics lessons which are well taught and fun. Most teaching is satisfactory, but some is of good quality.

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

51. Attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world is very low on entry to the Nursery and, although some children catch up a little throughout the key stage, on the whole attainment is below average at the end. Nursery children talk about plants and begin to learn about petals, stalks and the different shapes and feel of leaves. They learn the names of colours. They talk about and compare different materials and their properties and choose appropriate vocabulary to describe these. Children help to look after a hamster and know what is good for it, and some recognise that the apple, raisins and cheese provided for their own snack is healthy food for them. Reception children know how to make pancakes and repeat the activity in mime in the rôle-play area. Songs such as 'I've got a body' and 'Head, shoulders, knees and toes', help to revise knowledge of

different parts of the body. Children use the computer happily. Nursery children manipulate the mouse to work through pre-set programs and the Reception children log on and off with only a little help, can draw and are beginning to print text. There is no opportunity for children to operate a tape recorder for themselves, nor is the outside environment well used as a part of the normal curriculum, despite all classes having immediate access to it. Teaching is mostly satisfactory.

### **Physical development**

52. Attainment in children's physical development is low on entry but good progress is made and most attain the expected standards by the end of the key stage. Although the younger children have access to a safe, enclosed outdoor play area, it is not entirely satisfactory. It has a grassy slope, a fairly small hard area and no cover. It is quite small. Despite a good level of staffing, children are not free to move in and out at will for even part of their session. This reduces the regularity with which they gain physical activity and they are not able to choose it as an optional task. They go out as a whole-class activity for about half an hour when they use a good selection of wheeled vehicles, bikes and prams and throw balls, knock down skittles and play with hoops. Children play well, take turns sensibly and recognise the achievement of their peers. This outdoor session is only possible in good weather. There is no large climbing apparatus. While staff supervise the children well, they do not join in with them to assess their level of understanding or intervene to initiate discussions to take learning forward. Children in the Reception classes have one session of outside play and one physical education period each week. This is less than desirable. In class, all children learn to handle pencils and crayons and to use scissors correctly. They manipulate modelling materials, jigsaws and small construction apparatus with good attention to detail. There is no large construction apparatus. Resources and opportunities for the acquisition and practise of large and small motor skills are only adequate in the Nursery and are unsatisfactory in the Reception classes. Teaching quality is broadly satisfactory.

### **Creative development**

53. Attainment on entry is very low and, although children make some progress, it is still low at the end of the key stage. This is partly owing to a lack of opportunity for children to experiment with different materials, to have regular access to a rich variety of activities and to have the chance to make decisions. Children do not have access to a variety of tools, such as brushes or sponges and other things for making marks; they do not paint or do collage work as a sufficiently frequent and regular part of their curriculum, nor do they have enough chances to try things out, make mistakes and learn from them. Although Nursery children work to a programme of planned activities each session, and those in Reception have the chance for creative play on one afternoon each week, activities are most often teacher-selected, and give little opportunity for individual choices and decision making. Sometimes, too much emphasis is placed on tidiness during the activity and on not making a mess; this inhibits children's responses. Although some singing was heard and musical instruments were on show in classes, they were only used in a designated music lesson in Reception. They were not used by the children themselves in experimental ways. Too few opportunities for creative experiences in both Nursery and Reception classes are planned and provided. Teaching is broadly satisfactory.

## **ENGLISH**

54. At the end of the infants, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2C or better in writing and reading in national tests in 2000 was very low in comparison with both national averages and with similar schools. Pupils' work indicates that this trend is continuing with very few pupils reaching standards at or above national expectations for the age group. At the end of the juniors, results in national tests in 2000 showed standards to be well below national averages and below those of similar schools. Despite some improvements since the amalgamation, standards in 1999 and 2000 did not rise at the same rate as all schools nationally. Work seen in the present Year 6 shows that, although more pupils are on course to attain the national expectations for the age group than did so in 2000, very few are working above the average level. Moreover, there is a substantial minority whose work is below national expectations for pupils at the age of 11 years. However, there has been

an analysis of data which measure how pupils are learning as they move up through the school. These indicate that by 2002 an improvement in standards in the present Year 5 will bring the school closer to the national average at the end of Year 6. Inspectors agree that pupils' work in these years shows improvement.

55. Across the infants, pupils make steady progress in the aspects of reading, writing and speaking. In Years 1 and 2, many pupils express their ideas clearly when they are speaking. This is evident in their productions of short improvised plays, using puppets based on such as the 'Three Little Pigs' and the 'Big Bad Wolf'. There are a few who do not have the confidence to contribute much in class, and who in speaking tend to use short phrases in which the meaning is unclear. When pupils listen to a story, many make sensible guesses at what is going to happen next; this shows a good understanding of the story-line. Some pupils recognise rhyming words in the text. A few are beginning to use their learning about the sounds which letter combinations make to help with their reading. However, many still depend solely on sounding out initial letters if they come across unfamiliar words and use few other strategies. This does not always help them to identify unknown words. Most still refer to letters by the sound they make rather than by name, which has potential to confuse when different sounds are formed by the same letters. Spelling is a weakness in much of the work seen. Many pupils know that sentences begin with capital letters and end with full stops and use descriptive words to add depth to their work. Some recognise that the form in which a story is told can add to their involvement in it. For example, they used such devices as 'And then.....' in a story to raise the level of suspense. Some put words and pictures in the correct order to retell a story. However, there is little to show that pupils write their own stories or descriptions of events they have experienced. Much handwriting is very poor. Some pupils mix up upper and lower case letters and many present careless work. Very few attempt to join up their letters.

56. Progress in all aspects increases in the juniors to a good rate. As they move up through Years 3 to 6, pupils' confidence and skill in speaking grows. Most use a breadth of vocabulary which is expected for their age group. Some remain hesitant. By the end of Year 6, most pupils join well in whole-class discussions. From Year 3 onwards, many begin to recognise parts of speech such as nouns, verbs and adjectives, and some know the function of adverbs. Many pupils begin to realise that writing becomes more interesting if more adventurous vocabulary is used. To achieve this, many learn effectively to use a thesaurus - which offers a choice of expressions with a similar meaning. By Year 6, most use simple punctuation correctly. Handwriting and presentation are of a good standard and pupils take great pride in their work. The spelling of most common words is accurate. Many begin to realise that different words may sound the same in English but they are spelt differently and have very different meanings. Most in Year 5 are able to identify when a wrong word is used and correct this. By Year 6, many read at a standard expected for their ages and enjoy reading as a pastime of choice, but some still find difficulty in reading more challenging texts. Some name a wide variety of authors from Shakespeare and Dickens to Dahl and Rowlings, and are aware of the rôles of the author, illustrator, printer and publisher. Most pupils attempt writing in a wide variety of styles, for example science fiction, factual recall, plays and newspapers in appropriate formats. All pupils write book reviews, some of which are suitably detailed and show a good level of understanding of characters and story-line. They draft and revise their work effectively, improving the end product as a result. For example, some fantasy stories in Year 6 show a vivid imagination and contain some very creative ideas about how magic devices might affect people's lives. Some very perceptive writing was produced as a result of the pupils' strong reaction to the Indian earthquake disaster. This showed that many could understand how traumatic such events could be and bring such emotions into their writing. Some pupils in Year 6 justify why they have chosen particular sentence constructions which show a logical train of thought and some insight into the complexities of the English language. Computer technology is often used well to compose stories or reports, and also to help with spelling, sentence construction and general use of English.

57. The amalgamation of the infants and juniors schools has enabled the school to look at how English is taught from the earliest years through to Year 6, as part of an ongoing pattern. There have been improvements since the amalgamation. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has helped to give a clearer

structure to lessons. Teachers more often identify targets for pupils to aim for in their work. Drama plays a more effective part in the curriculum in keeping with the most recent changes to the National Curriculum. Classroom assistants continue to be well used to support pupils in class. Library provision still is not fully adequate, but there are areas in the corridors where the pupils may choose books to take home. They are then asked to write a book review about these. Standards are rising slowly in Years 3 to 6, in comparison to similar schools.

58. Taken as a whole, the quality of teaching is good but strongest from Year 3 onward. Out of eight lessons seen in Years 1 and 2, two were unsatisfactory, two satisfactory, two good, one very good and one outstanding. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Sixteen lessons were seen in Years 3 to 6. None was unsatisfactory, six satisfactory, five good, four very good and one outstanding. In these years the standard of teaching is mostly good or better. Standards remain low in the infants but there is considerable catching up in the juniors.

59. Where teaching is excellent, the teacher has a high level of enthusiasm which inspires pupils and makes them very eager to please and try their hardest. In successful lessons, a brisk start is made to engage pupils' attention right away. There is high expectation of good behaviour, coupled with very good relationships between adults and pupils, which ensure that pupils learn without distractions. Planning is often detailed and well designed to keep the lesson flowing. Often, the teacher tells the pupils what the lesson is going to be about and what they will learn, and so, at the end, both pupils and teacher are able to assess how well the teaching points have been understood. Pupils are encouraged to join in as the whole class reads the text they are studying. This encourages the more timid to have a go, thus increasing their confidence. The teachers have a good understanding of the subject, which ensures questions are put to challenge all pupils to think more deeply and extend their use of language. From the answers given, the teachers are often able to understand what the pupils need to be taught next, which makes for good progress in learning. Often, good use is made of teaching resources, such as visual aids or hand puppets. This adds impact and aids learning. For example, in Year 1, 'Bertie the Baby Elephant' makes intentional mistakes in his pronunciation, which the pupils then correct and so revise their own learning. In Year 6, good use is made of a speed task to fill in missing connective phrases in sentences to make pupils think quickly and accurately. This leads to lively discussion about which phrases work best and why, and so improves the quality of their writing. Tasks set for pupils in group sessions vary in level of difficulty so that all pupils have the opportunity to attempt work which will stretch them but be neither too easy or too difficult. From this, all gain a sense of achievement and their self-esteem is raised. This also helps to keep the whole class engrossed while they are doing their own work so there is no distracting behaviour. The balance of teachers' direct instruction and pupil activity is well judged in many classes and the pace of the lesson keeps the pupils on their toes throughout. In many classes, good use is made of the time at the end to bring the pupils back together to discuss in some depth what has been learnt. This helps pupils to review their learning and the teachers to assess what progress has been made.

60. Where teaching is less effective, the teacher does not always have much enthusiasm for the subject which tends to affect the pupils similarly. Not all teachers ensure that every pupil can see and be seen clearly, and it becomes more difficult at times to engage their attention. Sometimes, rather too long is spent on a particular activity and pupils then become bored and restless. On occasions, the lesson overruns the suggested hour and continues beyond the point at which pupils can concentrate, so some points of the lesson are lost and time is wasted. Very occasionally, the teacher does not use sufficiently effective methods to keep control of the class and pupils begin to shout out inappropriately and answers cannot be heard. Opportunities for pupils to learn are therefore lost. Sometimes, pupils are not encouraged to join in during the reading of the book for the day and so opportunities to practise skills are lost. Teachers sometimes rely too much on the answers the pupils give to provide instruction rather than using their own wider experience to lead pupils to a deeper and richer understanding. On occasions, the tasks set for groups are not always matched to what the pupils can already do. They are sometimes too easy for the higher attaining pupils, because the teacher has too low an expectation of what they could achieve if challenged. Thereby, their thinking is not extended and, as a result, their progress slows down.

61. Although all the different strands of the literacy scheme are taught, a lack of consistency in the quality of teaching and organisation results in similar variations in how well the pupils learn and progress. There are too many variations in the teaching of reading. Sometimes, reading is taught within the literacy hour and sometimes it is not. On some occasions, when reading is taught outside the hour, pupils spend too much time reading independently without clear purposes; thereby, the pace of learning slows. For example, one group within a reading lesson in Year 6 received good quality instruction for 30 minutes whilst other pupils attempted to read independently without success. Concentration wandered because of a lack of teaching instruction. Despite a considerable amount of in-service training, there is no adherence to an hour-long format. Some

sessions planned for longer result in many pupils marking time, particularly towards the end. Because the variations are unco-ordinated, there are breaks in the continuity from year to year in the three levels of text, sentence and word targets within the literacy scheme. Consequently, progress is often slow as a result.

62. There are clear procedures for formal assessment, and pupils' end-of-year assessments measure their attainment against national expectations. Informal assessment takes place weekly, and planning takes into account what this reveals. This also helps staff to review which attainment group is appropriate for each pupil from Year 3 upwards. However, pupils' work is not compared frequently enough with national expectations for the age groups to give staff a clear picture of exactly where groups of pupils have reached. All work is marked and praise given where due, but comments are not always helpful in giving pupils guidance on how to improve. Targets are set for each group in Years 3 to 6.

63. The management of the subject is sound. There has been much attention paid to the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. The co-ordinator has only recently taken on the post and so there has not yet been time for recent innovations to raise standards substantially. There is evidence in the upper juniors that quality and standards are rising. More pupils in Year 5 are on course to achieve the expected standards in 2002. Planning for the term is monitored across Years 1 and 2 by the co-ordinator to ensure consistency. In Years 3 to 6, planning is not monitored overall but each year group plans to the same format. All teachers have been observed in class in the last six months and given oral and written feedback of their strengths and weaknesses. There are strong cross-curricular links to information and communication technology which is timetabled for each class from Year 3 onwards. History, geography and religious education are used to provide opportunities for pupils to practise writing skills. There are sufficient resources of reasonable quality. The library has a reasonable selection of fiction books which are often borrowed by the pupils but the area used does not encourage browsing.

## **MATHEMATICS**

64. Standards in mathematics are below those seen nationally. The national tests taken in 2000 at the end of the infant stage show that results are very low compared to all other schools nationally and also when compared with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. In 95 per cent of all schools, pupils do better. The percentage of Year 2 pupils reaching Level 2 - the expected level - was well below the national average as was the number reaching the more difficult Level 3. Only two years' results are available for the school because of the recent amalgamation, but these show that both boys and girls have improved their results in 2000 compared with those seen in 1999. The results of the 2000 mathematics tests for pupils at the end of the junior stage indicate that almost half the pupils do not attain average standards while only one out of ten pupils achieve the more difficult Level 5. This is well below national averages. When measured against schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level is below average. A similar picture to that seen at the end of the infants emerges when results from the two available years are compared. In 2000, the results achieved by girls in the school fell slightly but those of boys rose appreciably illustrating the overall improving standards in the school. Evidence from observations in the current inspection indicates that attainment is rising and results will improve in future national testing to be close to national expectations.

65. Evidence at inspection shows that there is no marked difference between the performances of boys and girls. In most classes, pupils with special educational needs are appropriately supported, but in some, suitable work to meet their needs is not always provided. This also applies in some classes to higher attaining pupils, and there are occasions when they are not suitably challenged. The school is taking action to remedy this by teaching pupils in attainment sets, and evidence shows that this is having a positive impact.

66. By the end of the infant stage, pupils add two-digit numbers satisfactorily, but sometimes practise this too many times. They are able to construct simple graphs from information given to them. They display some understanding of symmetry, but not all show a complete grasp of this. Pupils recognise the names of many two- and three-dimensional shapes, but only the higher attainers recall all the names of these and their properties. At

the beginning of the junior stage many pupils multiply by single-digit numbers, and by the time of the inspection had moved on to grasp two-digit number multiplication. Much work has been completed on fractions so that now many older pupils calculate, for example, seven-eighths of a number and use this information to solve problems. Pupils in Year 6 quickly and accurately calculate the decimal equivalent of fractions and then convert these to percentages. Many show a good understanding of angles and the vocabulary linked to this such as 'acute' and 'obtuse'. More recently they have developed a good understanding of perimeter and area and calculate these accurately. Suitable stress is placed on the use of pupils' mathematical knowledge in solving problems and applying their knowledge to everyday situations. Across the school, pupils are taught and learn the appropriate mathematical vocabulary, but too often they are given insufficient time to develop a variety of strategies for solving problems and for explaining what they are doing and why.

67. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good overall in the school, but the main strengths lie within the junior age classes. Teaching in the infant stage is satisfactory with some lessons graded as good. However, a detailed analysis of pupils' work shows that too little account is taken of the needs of both the higher attaining pupils and those who find mathematics difficult. This is particularly so in Year 2. At this stage, several lessons are too long and this causes pupils to lose concentration and time is unnecessarily wasted. Between Year 3 and Year 6 the quality of teaching varies from satisfactory to excellent and is good overall. In particular, the quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6 is strong and this is where pupils make the most progress.

68. In the very good and excellent lessons seen the pace of work is rapid. Teachers have high expectations and ask questions which ensure that pupils have to think out their answers and give reasons for them. Pupils are challenged to explain the strategies they use when solving problems, and this ensures that their learning is firmly fixed and they understand what they are doing very well. An example of this occurred in an excellent lesson in Year 5 when the teacher challenged the pupils to find alternatives for a half. Using their existing knowledge in decimals, percentages and ratios, they provided several examples. In another challenging lesson, this time in Year 6, pupils discussed what they had learned on angles before moving on to learn new skills to measure and calculate the value of obtuse and reflex angles. These lessons are well planned and move with good pace and purpose. Where the pace and rigour of lessons slow and demands on the quality of pupils' work falls, learning becomes less effective and progress slows. Based on their previous attainment, most pupils' progress in the infants is steady but quickens appreciably towards the top end of the junior stage. Over the key stage, progress is good for most pupils.

69. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced well. All teachers have received the required training and planning shows that they have taken note of the importance of mental and oral mathematics. Results from teachers' records show that good gains have been made in this area since the introduction of the strategy. More direct teaching of skills and understanding now takes place, and this too contributes to the improvement of standards. Because teachers share with pupils what they are going to learn, pupils gain a clear idea of what they will be expected to know by the end of the lesson. Planning also shows the vocabulary pupils will learn and know by the end of each session. In the best lessons, teachers insist that accurate vocabulary is used. This understanding is regularly checked in plenary sessions at the end of each lesson. The best lessons are those where teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and this is passed on to the pupils. Where teaching is good, pupil management is also effective.

70. Mathematical skills and knowledge are used satisfactorily in other areas of the curriculum. They are used in accurate measuring in design and technology, in finding location using co-ordinates in geography and in understanding the passage of time in history. Information and communication technology is used in some classrooms to advance pupils' mathematical knowledge, but this is not yet sufficiently well developed across the whole school.

71. The subject is managed well. Satisfactory improvements have been made to results since the amalgamation. The rôle of the co-ordinator has been crucial in the improvement in the quality of training provided and the resultant teaching. The monitoring of the quality of teaching by the co-ordinator and senior management team has played a vital part in this. Standards are rising, especially in Years 5 and 6. The pace

and length of some lessons and the provision of appropriately challenging work for pupils of differing attainment remains to be solved in some areas of the school. Regular testing of pupils' attainment is undertaken and optional national testing in Years 3, 4 and 5 provides useful information on pupil progress. This is used in the junior stage to place pupils in attainment sets. A detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of pupils' mathematical knowledge and understanding is now undertaken and is helping teachers to appropriately focus their work. The school is now able to use this information to set challenging targets for the improvement of standards in end-of-year testing. Less effective is the use of day-to-day assessments of pupils' work and oral understanding to help teachers to modify their planning to meet all pupils' needs.

## SCIENCE

72. When taken as a whole, standards in science are below national averages at the end of the infants and broadly in line with them at the end of the juniors. However, while the 2000 national test results show some improvement on previous years they were well below average at the end of both key stages when compared to all schools nationally. However, they were below, but closer to those of schools in similar contexts at the end of the juniors. Work in class indicates that pupils have more knowledge and understanding than they show in written work at both key stages. More infants are on course to achieve higher standards in 2001 than did so in 2000. Appreciably more are on course to do so in the current Year 6, and even more are likely to achieve higher standards in 2002 if the pupils in Year 5 maintain the progress they are making now.

73. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that they do not make written records of scientific information relating to the ways in which they investigate. In Year 1, they answer mainly in response to simple worksheets about such things as flowers, plants and growing cress. Although pupils in Year 2 know that materials have different properties, in ways similar to Year 1 they do not cover or record enough work in depth related to the matters they study. Too much work is at a lower level than expected for pupils' ages, especially in scientific enquiry. Consequently, at the end of the key stage, pupils lack the facility to compare objects and living things, say if what happens is what is expected, explain their observations using simple, scientific terms, or understand why data are collected. Another factor affecting standards across the infants is that in classes in Years 1 and 2 they vary. In both years, standards are higher in one class than in the other owing to differences in teachers' knowledge of what pupils should do.

74. A scrutiny of pupils' work in the juniors shows that it is much improved in Year 3. Here, work is close to what is expected, but not as much as should be undertaken at the higher levels. Nevertheless, some pupils explain their methods and know something of fair tests. However, in Year 4, pupils' progress in scientific enquiry slows and pupils do not improve ways of carrying out tests and explaining their observations in scientific terms. They do not say what they expect will happen or why events occur. In Year 5, pupils gain more knowledge of scientific events. For example, they explore night and day and link the effects of shadows to the position of the sun. They know something about how matter changes from solid to liquid and to gas. However, their written work lacks predictions of events, the use of what they know already and an emerging grasp of how scientific ideas are based on evidence. Nevertheless, in class they know much of what is written in their accounts, although these are often very similar. In Year 6, pupils write their findings about pollination and flowers and have some suitably detailed knowledge of the parts of plants. However, they do not generally apply this knowledge sufficiently well to predict what they might find or explain what they have discovered.

75. At inspection, seven lessons of science were seen. In four, teaching was satisfactory with more strengths than weaknesses, in one it was of good quality, in another it was excellent, and in one it was poor. Teaching seen in the juniors was stronger than that seen in the infants. It was not completely satisfactory in the infants but satisfactory overall in the juniors and sometimes good in Years 5 and 6. This was borne out also by the scrutiny of pupils' work. Pupils make good progress in the juniors. On the whole, they begin from a base below national expectations and make gains to broadly in line with them. Teaching is strongest in Years 5 and 6: this also bears out work and pupils' responses in class.

76. All teaching to some, and often a great, extent shows that good relationships are established and expectations for pupils' behaviour are high. As a result, nearly all pupils are able to take advantage of the quality of teaching on offer. However, the quality varies sometimes within year groups; for example, in Year 1 where one class received teaching of satisfactory quality and one poor. This showed in pupils' responses in class and to some extent in their written work. It also varies between key stages, in that in the infants it is mainly satisfactory but sometimes poor, whilst in the juniors it is satisfactory or better and occasionally very good. Because of timetable constraints, it was not possible to observe science teaching in all classes, but work samples showed differences in Years 5 and 6, where one class in each case achieved a better standard, closer to the expected levels - although in no case was there much work at a higher level. As there has been an amalgamation between the infants and juniors schools since the previous inspections in 1997, it is not possible to show reliable comparisons between then and now. However, since the amalgamation standards have improved.

77. In the very best teaching - observed in a Year 5 class during the inspection - there are several important features which merit note. The lesson was about the body's systems and functions of major organs such as the heart. It was one in a series about these aspects. The teacher had prepared very thoroughly, with lots of good quality illustrations, books and charts to hand. A useful classroom display helped enormously, as did the full-sized skeleton and a computer program. The teacher made constant, well judged use of these materials to explain her teaching points as deeply and as carefully as possible. For example, a working model of the heart on a computer screen was discussed with all groups in turn during a written activity. Because of this deeply rich teaching, often many pupils experienced heightened interest and surprise at what they had learned. In addition, the teacher knew the subject well and had discussed her aims with the pupils at the outset. This enabled her to ask searching questions, to draw on pupils' past experiences and to keep her teaching interesting. This succeeded in getting pupils to try hard and work purposefully through the lesson: they added greatly to their previous knowledge. Another key aspect to this teaching was its variety and careful explanations about the meaning of words. The variety was achieved by offering different ways to learn: listening to the teaching; answering questions; taking time out to complete a question sheet; practical experience of measuring pulses; looking at a computer program; discussing good quality charts and diagrams; working in pairs; and working alone to complete an activity. The pupils were willing learners; they were deeply interested and had security in knowing exactly where they stood and what the class rules were. They were polite and friendly in their conversations with each other and visitors.

78. In the poor quality teaching in a Year 1 class, there were several important features which merited improvement. The teaching lacked richness of instruction and had much too low an expectation of how pupils should be challenged. Coupled with this, a lack of knowledge of the subject prevented searching questions or suitable challenge to higher attainers. Already, pupils had reasonable knowledge about how different materials varied. They had experience of this through watching a television programme prior to the lesson. The teacher had not adequately assessed what they already knew, and then went on to revise this in a poor quality introduction, a long and time-wasting walkabout, an unstructured walk through the Nursery class and plenary in the classroom afterwards on return. Consequently, progress was very slow. The pupils were not encouraged to say why they had been able to distinguish between materials. They did not discuss why it was important to know why materials have different properties, and they did not attempt to list comparisons between them. Much of their response was only at a level of working towards Level 1, instead of which they should have been challenged and responding at Levels 1 or 2. Those pupils with the highest levels of prior knowledge and understanding gained least of all, and those of lower attainment gained very little. However, good pupil-teacher relationships meant that pupils, although often disengaged and restless, behaved well, did not lapse into poor relationships and, despite some being bored and many being disinterested, made the best they could of a very unsatisfactory lesson.

79. Indeed, all teachers establish good relationships, plan reasonably well and have things to hand. Consequently, nearly all lessons flow well and pupils make at least steady progress. Progress is good in the juniors and quicker than in the infants where it remains steady on the whole, but slow in some lessons and steady or quick in others. This variation affects the standards overall. All teachers mark work although there is some comment which does not explain the standards gained, such as 'A good effort' or 'Brilliant'.

80. Management and leadership of the subject are sound overall: there are some strengths and some important weaknesses which are slowing the progress towards achieving higher standards. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and interested in the subject. She is able to provide advice to colleagues and plans for staff development since the amalgamation are clear. Teachers' knowledge and subsequent confidence have been improved since the introduction of the scheme of work advocated by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The policy is clear and has been reviewed. The co-ordinator has begun a useful exercise to purchase new teaching resources and to re-organise resources to match the new guidelines. In Year 1, homework packs of good quality have been made to encourage parents to discuss topics with their children at home. The co-ordinator has organised her information about the subject well and has helped planning at Key Stage 1. Inevitably, because the school has faced both a difficult amalgamation and recently placed an emphasis on literacy and numeracy strategies, science has taken a 'back seat' in development. Any monitoring has been informal and without the benefit of the quality of advice and guidance comparable with that provided in English and mathematics. In addition, there is some confusion in rôle, stemming from a present lack of clarity in job descriptions related to raising standards and improving teaching quality. Presently, it is difficult for teachers to find out what pupils know already and what they should move on to learn. Work is not monitored systematically and measured against expectations in the National Curriculum. Consequently, there is insufficient knowledge about standards of pupils' work and the most important curricular targets in each year group. In addition, lack of assessment, little analysis of answers to national tests and few teacher records mean that progress is difficult to gauge for groups and years. Some reliable data which the school has show that standards in Years 5 and 6 are likely to improve by 2002 and 2001 respectively. This is borne out also by the standards of work in class. Also, end-of-year testing in science in Years 3 and 4 now provides a platform for establishing the general pattern of progress in the juniors.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

81. In the infants, only two lessons of art and design were seen and were of good quality; both of these involved the use of an information and communication technology program. Also, two lessons were seen in the juniors. Other information was gathered from scrutinising work, looking at displays, photographic evidence and talking to both pupils and teachers. Overall, the work seen at the end of the infants meets expectations for the ages of the pupils and progress is steady across the key stage. At the end of the juniors, the standards of work seen were well above the standards expected for pupils' ages, and progress across the key stage was very good. Standards in art and design have improved since the amalgamation, particularly at the end of the juniors.

82. In Year 2, the quality of teaching seen was good and as a result all pupils are enjoying working on the program 'Colour Magic'. Because the teachers use good strategies to explain what is to be done and how, almost all pupils succeed. Often, teachers demonstrate first and then talk pupils through the routine; consequently, when pupils attempt work alone they have a clear understanding of what to do. All but the lowest attaining pupils approach tasks with confidence, produce simple patterns independently, and then use 'cut and paste' to repeat them to complete a whole page. The class teacher, assistant and their peers support those who are lower attainers, or have special educational needs so that they too eventually complete the task. Pupils have enjoyed investigating the use of pattern in the school building. They started by observation and drawing patterns, and then took textured rubbings of the patterning they found. Next, they transferred these ideas to printing repeated patterns, and finally made clay tiles with similar patterns tooled on them. Teachers' planning and pupils' work show that skills in these two areas have been taught effectively and in the correct sequence. However, there is little evidence to suggest that two-dimensional work is taught with sufficiently similar regularity or continuity. Although pupils do some work with paint, they do not build sequentially upon skills or experience a wide enough variety of materials. For example, there is little work in chalk, oil pastel or charcoal; neither do they begin to keep suitable sketchbooks.

83. In the juniors, there was limited evidence of three-dimensional work. However, teachers have begun very effectively to follow the new Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines in art and design. For

example, pupils are introduced to the lives and works of great painters. This was exemplified very well in work on Paul Klee where pupils had looked at the different areas he had visited to do his painting and noted how this had affected his work. Afterwards, they produced their own effective works entitled 'Theme Park', 'Discomania' and 'Sunset Beach' in a similar style, using paint, pastels and charcoal. Others have studied the qualities of soft pencil, charcoal and chalk and are using techniques learned to draw collections of containers and bottles. These are of a high standard and use different perspectives and careful shading to produce three-dimensional effects. Older pupils have been suitably guided when studying landscapes and know what is needed for foreground, middle-ground, background and horizon. Following this, they produced their own landscapes, appropriately gradating colour, size and shape to give good depth. Others, after careful observation, have drawn flowers and trees. Colour is used effectively and sensitively to give a feeling of delicacy of petals and leaves and fragility of high branches in the wind. All work is suitably evaluated by teachers and praised for its quality. It is eye-catchingly displayed. Art and design work - frequently of high quality - is used as a useful vehicle for many curricular areas. Consequently, Japanese theatre masks, African war masks, Tudor portraits, mansions and tall ships adorn walls, and work in the books of older pupils is frequently enhanced by careful drawings and illustrations.

84. The management of art and design is satisfactory. The co-ordinator supports teachers well to ensure that ideas, information and consumable resources are available to help teachers with the new art and design guidelines. She has begun to assemble a portfolio of work recorded on a digital camera and is encouraging teachers to look at the acquisition of skills by comparing work with National Curriculum standards. However, sound assessment procedures are not yet in place to enable teachers to build on pupils' prior attainment. Furthermore, because planning is not monitored, the lack of sequence in building upon pupils' skills in some year groups has not been properly identified or rectified.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

85. Only two lessons of design and technology were seen. Both were at the end of the juniors. Scrutiny of pupils' work and looking at displays indicate that, by the end of the infants, the standard of work meets the expectation for pupils' ages. In the juniors, there was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about standards.

86. The standard of teaching seen was satisfactory. However, in the infants teachers' planning does not take full advantage of the firm foundations for design and technology which are set in the Reception Year. Pupils understand the need for plans and patterns when preparing their work. This was exemplified when they used these well to make a coat of many colours for Joseph. Discussions with the co-ordinator revealed plans for many opportunities for design and technology skills to be taught through links with the local community. For example, in food technology younger pupils in the infants learn about bread making through liaison with the catering manager at a local supermarket. They also use the store to learn about fruits and vegetables from home and abroad. Older pupils in the juniors use food technology facilities at the link secondary school. Further links are being negotiated with a commercial pizza outlet. Others are being established with a furniture store to research the use of materials. Pupils in the juniors have opportunities to experience a bricklaying, plumbing and woodwork workshop during visits to the local technical college. Many of these activities are planned for the summer term. However, pupils do not make written records of the materials and methods used for these activities, nor do they record any processes of evaluation, testing and improving products. As no evidence from similar work completed last year was available from which to assess the acquisition of skills or progress in gaining knowledge and understanding, it was impossible to judge standards at the end of the key stage.

87. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator leads the subject with great enthusiasm and has forged many useful business links with the community. She has followed work experience with these firms in her own time and has encouraged other members of staff to do so. Because of this, some staff have a clearer understanding of the processes involved in making various products. The co-ordinator monitors work in the infants but not in the juniors because much of the work is to be planned for the summer term. However, there

are no written accounts by pupils of work in the juniors, and assessment is made difficult for the co-ordinator, because suitable procedures to judge standards are not yet in place. There is no mechanism by which to glean evidence and capture judgements.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

88. Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations at the end of the infants and above them at the end of the juniors. Since the amalgamation, standards in the infants have remained similar, whilst those in the juniors have somewhat improved.

89. Pupils in the infants make sound progress. They study their local area, successfully locate their homes on a large map of their surroundings and identify places like the church and other buildings of note. They study an area different from their own and make attempts to locate places on a map of the world. Other pupils use simple co-ordinates to locate where treasure is hidden. In a lesson on the rainforest, some used the terms 'canopy' and 'undergrowth'. In the juniors, pupils compare the climate and terrain in different countries with that of their own. They locate places on a map of the world. They extract information from a variety of sources - maps, books, pictures and tables of rainfall and temperature. They begin to give reasons for the judgements they make, for example that a place is nearer the equator than we are. They use correct geographical language in context. Good progress is made by all pupils, including those with special educational needs, although planning for those whose first language is not English is unsatisfactory.

90. Three lessons were seen. Teaching in one in the infants was of unsatisfactory quality. In the two others - in the juniors - it was satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers had good knowledge of the Programmes of Study, planned carefully, provided interesting resources and used questions well to extend pupils' thinking. Their own enthusiasm stimulated their pupils. Unsatisfactory teaching did not instil a good working atmosphere: many pupils did not listen properly. Although a good range of interesting resources was provided, the pace of the lesson was slow. This added to the restlessness. The geography curriculum is suitably enriched by frequent visits and the residential trips made by pupils from Year 2 onwards. In these ways, pupils have the opportunity for geographical study at first hand, reinforcing their knowledge and understanding in practical ways. These trips make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Most pupils enjoy geography and behave well in lessons, maintain concentration and work hard. They are interested and knowledgeable and, in the juniors, are beginning to study data objectively to draw conclusions. Displays are interesting and lively throughout and are well supported by other subjects, notably art and design, mathematics, English and information and communication technology. The use of information and communication technology as a source of information in lessons is less evident.

91. The subject is managed satisfactorily. A teacher has had responsibility for geography for more than a year and has begun recently to identify the main priorities for its improvement. She sees teachers' planning every term and has collected samples of pupils' work, but has not used these as examples of particular levels of work to help her colleagues to assess progress. She has written a three-year development plan for the subject in outline, correctly identifying the renewal and replenishment of resources and the introduction of assessment as key tasks. As yet she has had no opportunity to observe teaching. Currently, planning is based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority materials. Some staff need more detailed guidance to plan their work thoroughly. Assessment procedures are not established, nor is teaching of the subject monitored. Resources are unsatisfactory on the whole. Although each class has a map of the world and some books enrich displays, many text books are in poor condition and out of date. The central resource cupboard is poorly organized and untidy.

## **HISTORY**

92. Only two history lessons were seen during the inspection owing to the school's timetabling arrangements. Judgements are therefore made from a careful scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display and from discussion with the co-ordinator for the subject. Attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of the infants, and above age-related expectations at the end of the juniors. Displays in corridors and classes, photographs of visits made to places of interest and pupils' work in topic books reflect good coverage of the Programmes of Study. In the infants, pupils recognise the difference between past and present in their own lives and are beginning to appreciate the concept of the passage of time. They use simple vocabulary correctly. In the juniors, pupils place civilisations and events in the correct chronological context and use appropriate historical language related to the passage of time such as 'ancient', 'AD', 'BC' and 'century'. They learn about life in other times and describe important historical events from another's point of view. They extract information from different sources such as books, articles and pictures. History displays are lively and are supported by art and design, writing, mathematics, information and communication technology and books.

93. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress, although there is no extra consideration of those with English as their second language, and this aspect is unsatisfactory. Since the amalgamation, standards are similar in the infants and those in the juniors show improvement. In the lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory. Teaching was well planned and pupils were encouraged to apply skills and use the correct terminology. In one lesson, group work was less than satisfactory because pupils had not learned thoroughly how to co-operate in undertaking an investigation.

94. A teacher new to the school this year has taken over responsibility for the subject. Subject management is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has already looked at pupils' books and plans to collect samples of their work. She has devised an outline of topics to be covered by each year group throughout the school and to extend all in the light of experience. The outline allows topics to be revisited and learning to be extended or reinforced. Also, specific learning points for each topic have been identified to help teachers. Planning is based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines but supplements are planned to ensure that pupils work in sufficient depth. No progress has been made in establishing suitable assessment procedures, nor is history teaching monitored. The co-ordinator has worked hard in the first months of her responsibility and has correctly identified the need to improve planning, to implement assessment procedures and to improve resources, which are generally unsatisfactory: many text books are out of date and there are few artefacts. There is currently no central resource area in school for teachers to draw on or any record of what is available. However, staff make good use of local places of historical interest, libraries and museums. The range of visits and residential trips, made by pupils from Year 2 onwards, are suitable compensations and add interest and variety to the curriculum.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

95. Standards in information and communication technology are above those seen nationally by the time pupils leave the school. Since the amalgamation, substantial improvement has been made. From low levels of knowledge and understanding at entry, pupils make good progress and this results in them gaining increasing levels of skill and confidence across the school. Attainment in this subject is one of the strengths of the school.

96. By the end of the infants stage, pupils' attainment is in line with what is expected nationally for pupils of this age. This is largely owing to the good quality of the teaching provided. Teachers are well trained and confident in their own skills, and they are able to pass these on to the pupils. In the lessons observed in Year 2, pupils demonstrated sound levels of basic skills. They confidently follow instructions. Good quality teaching enables them quickly to learn the necessary skills to access and develop their work. For example, they learn to use the edit facility and use cut and paste techniques to produce repeating patterns. Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to practise skills and this ensures a good understanding of the processes. In these lessons, pupils

demonstrate appropriate skills in changing colour, font and letter size as well as good mouse control skills. Good teaching ensures that pupils are able to explain what they are doing using accurate vocabulary. The lessons are taught in sensibly small sections which allow pupils fully to learn one skill before moving on to the next. This represents good practice and aids the good progress being made by most pupils.

97. By the age of eleven, pupils have made good progress to reach standards above national expectations for the age group. Good and sometimes very good teaching ensures that pupils learn the necessary skills to allow them to become independent learners. Many pupils have reached a sufficiently high skills level to enable them to self-correct when mistakes are made in moving from one section of a program to another. In very good lessons seen in Years 5 and 6, pupils applied their skills in cutting and pasting to import pictures from the Internet. They then passed these on to their friends through their e-mail links. Pupils demonstrate a good recall of previous work, a sign that the quality of previous teaching has been successful. They become increasingly confident in the use of the correct vocabulary to describe what they have done. Good teaching checks that pupils know what they are doing but also why. Teaching is similarly organised in small, effective sections which allow pupils to consolidate their learning. By Year 6, pupils use the Internet to access information, have a good grasp of the uses of e-mail and are using programs such as 'Publisher' well to improve the quality of their work.

98. Six lessons were seen. In two, teaching was satisfactory, in another two it was good and in the remainder it was very good. Overall, teaching is good. Most teachers are confident and knowledgeable and, when necessary, are able to correct pupils' problems. Lessons are well planned and move with good pace and so help to increase pupils' interest and motivation. All teachers have received and continue to receive very effective training. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are often high and this helps to raise standards.

99. The subject is soundly managed. The school is aware of its strengths and is working hard to correct identified weaknesses. Improvements in control, monitoring and modelling are required and this appears prominently in the school's development plan. The school is aware also of the need to extend further the use of information and communication technology in classrooms and across all subjects in the curriculum. Following the successful development of pupils' basic skills, this aim is now well in hand. Improvements in the quality of teaching information and communication technology and the development of an appropriate computer resource have helped raise standards substantially since the amalgamation. To improve further the quality of teaching, members of staff are continuing their training. Resources are good and improving. Recording of pupils' knowledge and understanding is satisfactory.

## **MUSIC**

100. Pupils' overall standards in music at ages seven and eleven years are broadly in line with those expected. By Years 5 and 6, standards in singing are above the expectations.

101. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn to use a variety of untuned percussion instruments. Most keep to the beat and rhythm in simple patterns to accompany singing. Songs are often illustrated with appropriate actions as in 'Love is something if you give it away'. Many recognise symbols to represent different sounds and change the pitch and gradation in volume to alter the effect when they are playing or singing. As they move up through the school, many learn to listen carefully to other pupils and to taped music - most understand what message it is giving. For example, when listening to Saint Saens 'Carnival of the Animals', many successfully identified which animal was being represented, with particular enjoyment of the 'cat' section. Some show good creative imaginations in composing when they explore different ways of making sounds; for example, scrunching paper or scraping table tops. Many become aware of how changes in pace or volume alter the mood of a piece of music or a song. By the upper end of the school, the quality of singing is quite advanced. Some pupils make a good attempt at singing two-part songs with complicated harmonies, difficult rhythms and challenging octave spans. They also sing well unaccompanied. All these attributes were seen particularly in the choir's rehearsal of Michael Hurd's 'Jonah Man Jazz' - this in a group which is not selected by prior attainment. In the upper

juniors, pupils' performance skills are generally confident and usually well received by their peer group.

102. Since the amalgamation, there have been some improvements. The choir is well established and gives an opportunity for all pupils to extend their knowledge and appreciation of music. The brass ensemble is beginning to take shape and helps pupils to work together as a group or perform as individuals. A recorder club for Year 3 pupils has been set up. Listening skills are being well developed to increase general enjoyment in music of all kinds.

103. Only two lessons of music were observed. These were in the upper juniors: in one, teaching quality was good and in the other it was very good. Judgements are based on these, listening and talking to pupils and observation of music in the school. Pupils' learning is shown in assemblies where there is often a musical contribution. Pupils' enthusiasm bears witness to the teaching which goes into such occasions. Teaching works best when the teacher encourages the pupils to concentrate on particular aspects in music to heighten their awareness of what to listen out for. From listening carefully to music like the snake's song 'Trust in Me' from the 'Jungle Book', pupils are led skilfully into suggesting different ways of illustrating the animal's movement. Planning is detailed and thorough so that lessons flow to follow a pattern which the pupils recognise. High expectations of good behaviour ensure that all pupils listen attentively. This offers maximum learning opportunities. Even when the group being taught is very large, the same good standards of

concentration are evident. Humour and rôle play are used well to add to the enjoyment of music. Pupils are asked to evaluate their own performance and that of others and to suggest ways in which improvements could be introduced. This develops critical awareness and extends pupils' understanding of music. Where teaching is less successful, there is not enough engagement in practical work and pupils sit inactively for too long. In contrast to other lessons, pupils are not usually asked to stand to sing: this decreases the ease in use of their breathing to control volume and tone.

104. The subject is well managed. The music policy is a sound document showing term-by-term progression, and is based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines. Teachers are well supported with detailed planning which gives even non-specialist teachers clear guidance. At staff meetings, the next unit to be studied is discussed and assistance given by the co-ordinator where necessary. A sheet recording significant achievements or areas which need closer attention has been drawn up. This helps teachers and pupils to recognise what has been learnt. There is no other formal assessment as yet, but pupils' progress is constantly assessed informally to identify where learning has to be revised. In line with the recent alterations to the music curriculum, appropriate priority is being given to listening skills. Resources are still rather sparse despite the recent acquisition of brass instruments which has improved their range. Also, members of staff are quite inventive in making suitable percussion instruments from tubes and boxes. New funding will be available for equipment in the very near future. There are cross-curricular links to information and communication technology where keyboard software is used. Music is sometimes used to stimulate pupils' art work and plays an important part in school assemblies in setting the tone and helping to create the positive atmosphere.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

105. Standards and progress in physical education at the age of seven are in line with national expectations and above them by the age of eleven. Since amalgamation, this represents a fall in standards in the infants but a rise in the juniors. The school provides an extensive range of additional activities which substantially enhances pupils' social skills and awareness as well as their attainment. Skills are developed in all the areas required by the National Curriculum, including out-door adventurous activities, gymnastics and swimming. In both key stages, pupils learn to swim well with the younger pupils using the school's own pool while older pupils use larger facilities nearby. Effective instruction ensures that almost all pupils swim the required 25 metres using a recognisable stroke, and a large number exceed this standard by the time they leave the school. Many extend their skills through distance and personal survival awards.

106. Pupils at the infant stage enjoy gymnastics and dance and link their movements together well. They stretch, curl, jump and roll with control and good awareness of others working round them. Some move expressively to music and repeat movement patterns when, for example, they 'pick blossom'; however, work does not always sufficiently challenge them to think of other ways that they could move. They interpret mood satisfactorily and use skipping and swinging movements to represent happiness. They work appropriately in pairs and work hard to mirror the actions of their partners. Quality is improved through pupils' demonstrations at appropriate times during some lessons, although they are given too few opportunities to say how movements could be further improved and to demonstrate these. This results in pupils' work which is satisfactory in content and quality, but does not sufficiently move on to more difficult skills such as extending balances and the imaginative sequencing of movements. Teaching at this stage is of satisfactory quality. Quality is not higher because pupils sometimes are not sufficiently challenged, nor are skills taught to higher levels to enable them to plan to improve their movements.

107. The judgement about the quality of work at the junior stage is based on some observation of lessons and backed by pupils' responses at other times and in other events. Most lessons seen involved gymnastics and dance. Lesson observations indicate that by Year 5 pupils understand the importance of physical health and its benefits. They define and illustrate symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes and practise to improve their balance and control to enhance the quality of movement. Pupils work well together and discuss ways that they can extend their work by changing speed, level and direction. The quality of teaching at this stage is good. Planning

takes appropriate note of the development of skills, knowledge and understanding and how these build progressively.

108. The subject is managed in a satisfactory manner. Resources are adequate. A considerable programme of extra-curricular activities adds to the quality of physical education at this stage. Large numbers of pupils are regularly involved in fitness clubs, gymnastics and a range of inter-school competitive activities. This includes cross-country running which very much adds to the quality of what is on offer. A very good example of this occurred when pupils put on a gymnastics display to demonstrate their skills prior to competing in the local championships. This illustrated to other pupils the high quality that could be achieved through hard work and dedication. This very much represented the ethos of the school. The dedication and hard work of the staff result in pupils who are interested in sporting activity, who understand the benefits and who are eager to improve the quality of the work they do. Further work remains to be done on providing a consistent quality of teaching across the key stages and better quality records of pupils' achievements.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

109. Five lessons were observed during the inspection period, two in the infants and three in the juniors. Evidence was gained from looking at displays, scrutinising pupils' work and teachers' planning and talking to pupils and teachers. At the end of both key stages, standards and progress are in line with expectations set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus<sup>7</sup>. Standards have remained similar since the amalgamation.

110. In the infants, the quality of teaching was satisfactory in one lesson and good in the other. Teachers encourage pupils to discuss their feelings and then, in a cross-curricular activity, to make puppets with sad, happy or angry faces. They talk about their friends and which friends are good to have and then discuss what they want a friend to be. They consolidate this knowledge by performing in assembly illustrating their ideas with short drama, readings and pictures. The teacher adds to the occasion by including the music 'You've Got a Friend'. Teachers follow the Agreed Syllabus for religious education, linking festivals appropriately with seasons. Pupils have celebrated Harvest and Christmas and are now learning about the Hindu festival of Holi. They enjoy this work immensely as teachers have prepared lessons well to include dance, music and drama. Pupils are aware of the significance of hand movements in dance to illustrate the flames of fire and are able to liken the story of Prahlad in the fire to Daniel in the lions' den. They act out the story of Krishna and Radha and throw coloured confetti to represent splashing with coloured water. All know that Holi is a happy festival to welcome spring. In the juniors, three lessons were seen. In one teaching was excellent, in one very good and in the other satisfactory. In the visit to the local church, the teaching related to a Christian wedding was excellent. Pupils were captivated and learned much about the beliefs of Christians related to marriage. This was owing to the excellent co-operation between teachers and the local minister.

111. At the beginning of the juniors, pupils continue to learn about festivals. They visit the local church and enact a wedding ceremony. 'Invitations' have been sent out and pupils dress up appropriately. Parents have been invited as wedding guests. As the service progresses, the minister explains the significance of each section. As a result, the pupils have a very good understanding of Christian marriage and the commitment which it entails. The visit is very well prepared and constitutes a rich learning experience for pupils. As they progress through the juniors, pupils learn of different world religions and religious leaders. Their written work is neat and increasingly well illustrated, showing the detail of the facts they have learned; for example, the intricate detail of prayer mats, the life of Muhammad and stories of the ten Gurus. Although a wide variety of work is covered, most of the information recorded is copied from given texts. The teachings of each religion are listed, but there is very limited evidence of detailed writing when pupils show what they remember and understand. They have too little opportunity to recall and compare stories from Christian and other world religions. However, individual teachers' planning shows that within lessons there is opportunity for pupils to discuss ideas and feelings.

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<sup>7</sup> The school has adopted the locally Agreed Syllabus and the expectations for religious education are set out therein.

112. The management of religious education is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a sound knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus and is using this and the new Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines for religious education to form a scheme of work. She gives good support to teachers, ensuring that the necessary resources are available for each unit of the syllabus. Many are borrowed from a nearby multi-cultural centre. Planning is monitored. However, there are no assessment procedures in place and no work sampling process or provision for comparing pupils' work with the standards expected to help teachers raise their expectations.